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BONUS ISSUE!!

NUMBER 25

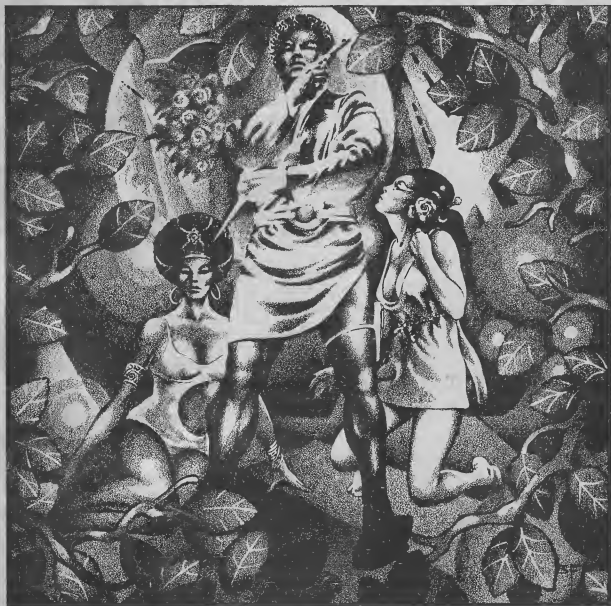
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Interviews: **GEORGE SCITHERS - POUL ANDERSON** \$1.50
URSULA K. LE GUIN

FLYING SAUCERS & THE STYMIE FACTOR

By Ray Palmer

LARRY NIVEN - JACK CHALKER - HARLAN ELLISON - PHILIP JOSE FARMER - MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY



ONE IMMORTAL MAN

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WHOLE NUMBER 25

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RICHARD E. GEIS, EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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AN INTERVIEW WITH C.J. CHERRYH**

AN INTERVIEW WITH BEN BOVA*

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ALIEN THOUGHTS



BY THE EDITOR

1-7-78 The copy for SFR 24 went screaming to the printer yesterday, clawing at its folder, yowling something about going naked into a cold world... It struck me that I give birth to a new child every three months.

Maybe fortunately, the literary children of editors and writers never grow up, never mature, but exist like photographs, a captured, encapsulated world of observation and belief.

And then, another issue, another story, is begun. As now.

The format of this issue is going to be a bit different as I phase down and diminish the presence of non-Geis contributors. "Alien Thoughts," for instance, experimentally, this issue, will encompass my editor's diary and include letters. "Prozine Notes," "Small Press Notes," "The Archives," "The Alter-Ego Viewpoint," possibly "And Then I read..." and current event commentary ("Reports From Alternate Earth #666") will appear in separate columns and departments. It makes for greater variety in layouts and makes for easier special-interest reading and finding.

LETTER FROM PETER WESTON

28 December, 1977

'One or two people have written asking what's happened to the ANDROMEDA series, apparently following a note in SFR. I thought

I'd better get in touch to let you know that the rumour of our demise is, as they say, somewhat exaggerated.

'All that's happened is that I've had great difficulty in getting stories of a suitable standard, with the result that I'm very late in sending the manuscript to the publisher (who is getting very cross with me as a result). The intention is to continue with future books, probably on an annual basis unless something dramatic happens. I must say that I'd never realized how many bad SF manuscripts were floating around before I started this job!

'Please put a comment somewhere in SFR that I'm still looking for material for #3 and future books, paying in the region 2-3¢ per word for first British rights only. (Still wish you'd sequel "One Immortal Man.")'

((I managed to squeeze in a notice from Futura last issue that the series was still alive, and am happy now to present further word. My British informant was mistaken.

((I have had the recurrent desire to publish an all-fiction zine, BOLD SCIENCE FICTION (or IRRESPONSIBLE SCIENCE FICTION TALES) but good sense always prevails as I know I'll be flooded with bad ones. The moment I announce the magazine. No matter how specific I might be in slant desired, I'd get 150,000 slush-pile ones. Not even if I said 'by invitation only'. So Alter's publishing venture is a no-go.

((If I stopped publishing SFR I'd be writing sf. But I find it extremely difficult to manage both at the same time. I would have to structure-in fiction writing with SFR...run a serial or a novelet in each issue...so that I'd be forced to write say one SFR page column of sf per day to fill a huge gap in each issue, in order to make the fiction and SFR cohabit in my life. Putting in 15-20,000 words of my fiction per issue would make SFR a truly one-man-show (with perhaps one interview and letters the only outside presence). I might try it after I've worked down the large backlog of in-hand and coming interviews and articles. Maybe in 1979. Believe it or not, Alter-Ego has his STAR WHORES (I prefer MURDER ON STAR SHIP 469 as a title) novel outlined, and perhaps 1979 would be a good time to let him do it for SFR publication.

((ONE IMMORTAL MAN is converted into chapters---three opening and one last---with an outline of intervening action to novel length and is presently in the hands of a large paperback house. Has been for nine weeks. But it may be that Vik Kunzer is too damned savage, ruthless and sex-obsessed to be a commercially viable SF Hero. We shall see. If the partial is returned I may indeed serialize the novel in SFR for the hell of it, and to get him out of my system.))

LETTER FROM KLAUS BOSCHEN

Jan 2, 1978

'Re. SFR 23; I approve of the increase of interviews featured. Interviews always interest me the most as far as the content of fanzines are concerned. Robert Anton Wilson's reviews reflect a world-view that might be labelled cosmic materialism, making somewhat puzzling his categorization of Martin Gardner as "high priest of the Materialist Church." Wilson, Leary and Gardner all share the basic assumption of materialism which is that human consciousness is a product of the neurological processes of the brain and to a lesser extent the other physiological processes of the human body. This conception of Man has as its antithesis the spiritualist's view of Man as a non-physical spiritual entity controlling a body via the mind. Wilson and Gardner are both members of the same Church despite any other differences of viewpoint.'

((I think you make a good point. It's the old mind-over-matter faith vs. mind-is-matter. I am with the mind-is-matter believers, and the "science fiction" I read that treats mind as immaterial, capable of out-of-body existence and easy transfer to alien or other human bodies, is very hard for me to accept. It is supernaturalism and spiritualism and fantasy dressed up in sf's clothes.

((I think this trend is polluting the precious bodily fluids of the genre, indicates lack of moral fibre, cowardice and....and.... lack of discipline!))

1-11-78 Chuck Garvin of Garvin & Levin, Booksellers, called last night to tell me that Don Day was in the hospital with very severe kidney failure.

Old-timers will remember Don's

excellent fanzine, THE FANCIEST from the early fifties, and the DAY INDEX of sf stories.

LETTER FROM AN SF EDITOR

January 3, 1978

'As it stands, I find two fundamental problems with this story ((the novel partial ONE IMMORTAL MAN)) for publication by _____. First it is pornographic---by that I mean there is much explicit sex that does not particularly advance the story. Secondly, the hero makes too damn many mistakes to have lived as long as he has. Making love with an emissary from the enemy, foresooth. Also, he has either too many morals, or not enough. I think his character should be explored more completely (so should the society for whose development he is largely responsible).'

((So, what is bought and praised in England is rejected in the U.S.A. And what one editor objects to another does not...))

((This sort of thing drives authors crazy.

((And so, foresooth, I have in my infinite egotism and rage-at-being-rejected decided to go ahead and serialize ONE IMMORTAL MAN in SFR, starting this issue. You will read the first third of the novel here and decide for yourselves if the sex is too explicit, if the hero is too mistake prone... I will make no changes from the version published in England ... but I have already made a minor change at the end of a chapter to allow continuation of the story to novel length. The sex level and mistake level remain the same.))

LETTER FROM PHILLIP L. KENT

December 19, 1977

'So who in hell is writing you from Minnesota Security Hospital? Me, of course, but as a staff member rather than a resident. As is stored somewhere in your memory bank I am a modern-day equivalent of a miracle worker, that is a psychologist, and, marvelous to say, my job includes evaluation and treatment of sex offenders, this being the only state run program in Minnesota.

'The psychological profiles of many of the offenders are such that we would not label them mentally ill in the strict sense of the word, but mostly anti-social personalities and/or sociopaths and the like.

'We are modelled after a pro-

gram at Ft. Steilicomp (sp?), Washington, which uses a therapeutic community/reality approach (they supposedly have a 90% cure rate which is phenomenal for any type of mental health program).

'Knowing your indirect interest in the field of sex offenders, you may be interested in knowing that as far as Minnesota is concerned, there is no such thing as a female sex offender, and thus does not treat them. It is also of interest to note that many of our residents are heavily into pornography which tends to reinforce many of their actions which got them here in the first place (we have to assume that we, of course, have a consensual (cough) definition of pornography), but the magazines that probably tend to do them the most harm are the ones like MASTER DETECTIVE and POLICE GAZETTE and the like that merge sex with violence -- from our standpoint the latter are greatly more anti-therapeutic than the former. Be interested in hearing your views...'

((Anti-social behavior is anti-person behavior, and of course is caused by lack of emotional controls, lack of early 'taming' of the essentially solipsist infant mind. So whatever the type of offending, unwanted behavior, the insufficiently self-disciplined buried infant mind has to be made to realize its limits and the existence-as-persons and rights of other human bodies.

(I do not think exposure to pornography causes offensive sexual behavior. I have never heard of a sex mag editor or publisher running amok. Nor have I heard of a sex censor showing or admitting sex offensive behavior as a result of his/her intensive exposure to sex material.

((It is that solipsist infant who cannot stand frustration or admission of failure who is behind most 'anti-social' behavior and who is the real sociopath personality. But society loves to blame the symptom and the material associated with the symptom, rather than face the cause...because the cause is so impossible to cope with and admit.))

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

20 Jan 78

'SFR 24 in and as usual deserving of many a superlative, although the mix on 23 was a hard, hard act to follow, being full of Geis and hard-hitting interviews (for some

reason the one with Piers Anthony sticks in the mind: strong, flavorful, emotional, an arrrrrrsing self-portrait by a brilliant man I certainly wouldn't want to be; it's hard enough being me). I could have used more REG this time and look forward to 25 if Alter is going to take over (all power to the BEM soviet!).

'Your piece on the STAR WARS hype (glad to hear you liked the flick; I thought you would) is right on target and reminded me of something MAD did on the Davy Crockett hype some years ago, offering for sale things like Davy Crockett athlete's foot disinfectant and a metal-lathe part called a Davy Crockett revolving jaw follower rest, or whatever.'

((Alter and I are now co-editing SFR, in secret. I don't tell him what I'm doing, and he doesn't tell me his moves. Yes, #25 ought to be an interesting issue....))

'I could have used more Gilliland, too...and will be sorry when the "Cover-Up Lowdown" feature runs out.'

((The "Cover-Up Lowdown"s were all used up in 24. No more left. All gone.))

'I don't know what else Roger Elwood still has going in sf. He does have a comic book for Whitman on sf, and he is the packager of the "Doc Smith" series Stephen Gold is writing for, uh, is it Jove?'

((No, Pyramid.))

'Local sf news: Sherwood Oaks Experimental College is offering an sf special-effects seminar starring Trunbull & Dykstra and the rest. Bet it is snowed under by Trekkies and Wookies (is there a name for the STAR WARS freak? I hereby suggest Wookiee).'

((Perfect, since Wookies always win.))

'Also: Bradbury's CHRONICLES play is back, this time at hard-ticket prices on Wilshire near Fairfax---the sold-out first run, in a tiny equity-waiver place, was way the hell out in Glendale---and will go on a national tour soon, with Paul Gregory taking over as "producer" (don't I remember him from the Laughton tour of DON JUAN IN HELL and from JOHN BROWN'S BODY?). Will also be a TV miniseries.

'Dean Koontz seems to have moved to L.A. and joined my Mystery Writers of America chapter but I have yet to meet him. He is selling everything he does in five to six figures now.'

((I don't know how to explain Dean Koontz's success to myself. He has gone from writing bad sf to

"Eh!" mainstream occult and mainstream sf. He knows all the commercial writing tricks and angles, as THE VISION shows, but there is little in his writing to think about and admire---except his obvious command of the fast-paced Commercial Style and right choice of material.

(He was a low-paid teacher in Pennsylvania, he wrote a few ho-hum science-fantasy novels, wrote a few reviews for SFR, an article for SFR, and then seemed to make a conscious decision to By God Write For Money, and did just that---and became a consummate hack; that is, an extremely well-paid hack.

(I don't intend to put him down like this. I admire him, but his cold-blooded decision---and ability to do the deed---repels me for some reason. I don't envy him the money. I resent that he gets so much for what I consider merely competent work.)

'Incidentally, I called the Bradbury play people about review comps and was told they already had enough good reviews. La de da! No comps for nobody.

'Jessica Amanda Salmonson: "It is all well and good to demand the test, 'turn it around and see if it works,' but in some cases the test proves nothing. Men really DO rape women---the most a woman can do is blow the fucker away with a twelve-gauge." Oh, dear. Oh, dear. Will you read me that one again, there, sweetie-pie? I thought we had consigned to the Victorian junkpile forever the Fate Far, Far Worse Than Death. And here it is back again: murder as a secondate substitute for rape.

'Jesus Christ, Richard. The finest known argument for the corny old Penis Envy concept is what happens to Diesel dolly when the subject of rape comes up. It doesn't matter how good you can do your John Wayne imitation, swaggering and singing bass, if, when the chips are down, that bulge in your basket is four of five hankies and not the authentic schlong. And hell hath no fury like the macho-macho-in-the-crotch feminist who discovers that not even a Steely Dan dildo strapped to her pubis is going to help her rape a male. Horrors! She has to settle for second best, and that happens to be fantasizing about bloody murder and playing dreadfully banal old Freudian games in which guns deputize for pricks. If we are going to dust off old white-elfant-sale material like The Penis As Weapon and haul Victorian junkie like the Fate Far, Far Worse Than Death out of mothballs, then we have no choice but to visit Penis Envy in drydock

and consider giving the old tub a new paint job and seeing if it'll float again. It's virtually the only Occam's Razor explanation which makes sense of the positively indecent haste with which the butch chickies are taking up the discarded leavings of the no-longer-overtly-macho male and struggling to piece together a coherent feminist philosophy out of ideological sloppiness.

(Wow. However, and but, I do not think you are aware of exactly where Jessica is coming from, figuratively as well as literally. Jessica is a transsexual. Formerly Amos. She may be uniquely qualified to speak on male-female relationships. I hardly think she is envious of the penis, since she willingly had one cut off.

(On the other hand she may be compensating a bit by being a super feminist because of feelings of insecurity in her womanhood.

(Anybody remember when Myra, in MYRA BRECKINRIDGE, trapped a man in a certain position and gave him a taste of rape with a dildo in the anus? That movie was ahead of its time.)

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Jan 25, 1978

'Somebody in SFR 24 mentions that the magazine is so compulsively readable that it gets read even when it shouldn't. Right now I should be writing the final draft of my Borgo Press Lovecraft treatise, which is monstrously overdue (the first time I ever attempted anything to order beyond very short lengths --- I had no idea how long it would take), but every time I settle down to it the zine slithers across the room & I read more of it. It definitely slithers now in the all newspaper format, there being nothing stiff enough to hold it up. When it had heavy covers it used to walk... So anyway I must blame you for wrecking my career. I always end up reading parts of the issue, then going through to fill in the gaps, until I've read it all.

'You have touched upon a very important problem pp. 56-57. As you know I've been involved with ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAG for about a year now. The masthead calls me and a few others assistant editors. As you also probably know, the ASIMOV'S contract has been so revised as a result of negotiations with SFWA that it shouldn't scare anybody off. (Anthology use now non-exclusive.) We pay the highest rates in the field when you con-

sider that the author gets an almost guaranteed anthologisation (and extra money) in the Dale Books reprint series. (These are virtually reprints of whole issues in paperback, to be sold thru department stores & other places beyond the range of the magazine audience. So far it's working.) This, I think, gives me a good idea of what sort of material is floating around these days, now that we're on the verge of a boom in the field.

'Frankly, I'm worried. The impression I get is that many of the best writers, including the big finds of the past decade, are either not writing, or not writing very much. Some have gone on to write novels. A few are not writing nearly as well as they used to. But the result of this is there is not enough publishable short material to fill existing markets. We've often discussed what would happen if the magazine were to go monthly without using serials (something we don't want to do) and the general consensus is that we could not fill the pages if we did. Here we are at the top of the market and we are lucky to get one submission from a SFWA member a week. Stories from such minor names as Stephen Leigh stand out as the biggies. Sometimes a week or more goes by and we don't buy anything, even though maybe three hundred manuscripts from unknowns have passed through our hands. I understand that ANALOG is in the same situation, and a look to the current (February) P&SF reveals a shortage of science fiction there too. Only three sf stories, none of them very good. (The Welles was good, but only marginally sf.) Now when Scithers and I disagree it's usually because he intends to buy something I don't think is good enough. (In a year



I can only recall three instances in the other direction, only one of which I felt was really strong.) I think much of what we print is less than wholly satisfactory, although probably better than much of what appears elsewhere. Better material isn't to be had, even for 5-6¢ a word. Even more marginally publishable material isn't to be had. Thus the Roger Elwood phenomenon never ceases to astound me. Sure most of it was just marginal, but where did he get it? To buy a higher percentage than we do would require lowering standards below acceptable levels.

'This vacuum at the top means, of course, that there is no end to opportunity for new writers. In our next issues we have seven never-before-published authors. (Six stories, one a collaboration.) That beats UNEARTH right there. But how many of these new authors can become regulars. We think we have three or four who can. Some of our best first stories (e.g. the one by Sally Sellers) have never been followed up.

'It seems virtually impossible to find someone who can present a future society believably. Alien worlds are usually about as large and diverse as Wilmington, Delaware, with or without suburbs. Aliens themselves seldom differ from humans in any regard. There is a vast amount of gimmickry but little sincerity. Characters seldom grow or develop. I'd have to ask someone far more experienced than myself to find out if this has always been the case. But it seems to me the sf field was in much better shape ten years ago. More major writers were writing their best. These days in the short fiction field it seems like every new Varley story is an Event, and the rest is pretty dull. There are good stories still being published, but few outstanding ones, and a large gray mass of mediocre material. Most is just bland and trivial.

'I agree with you completely that the demand will exceed the available supply of quality material---perhaps this has happened already---and the boom will bust. Some of the more firmly established magazines and publishing lines will survive, but the rest will be swept away. I wouldn't expect AMAZING, FANTASTIC, GALAXY, GALILEO, or the remaining anthologies (especially NEW DIMENSIONS with its lack of a paperback publisher) to survive a major bust. VOID is probably too far removed from the American scene to be involved. It's now turned into a specialty press hardcover anthology with a print run of 1500 or so. The economics of such an oper-

ation are vastly different from mass market stuff.'

((Seems like when a writer attracts some attention, writes a dozen good stories, has talent, he/she is lured by the big money in books and stops writing short stories. And the established Names are all bent under the weight of book contracts for the next few years...))

March 15, 1978

'The submissions to ASIMOV'S come in waves. Sometimes they are appallingly few. Sometimes we're almost full up. Feast & famine. I think more famine will come when we go monthly. By the way, we have a companion mag, ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE, which is a 8-1/2 x 11 neo-PLANET STORIES. I know that format has been fatal in the past, but this zine is somewhat juvenile and heavily (25%) illustrated, & designed to survive in the dollar comic niche on the stands. 1st issue in June will have a Stainless Steel Rat novel by Harrison, a Paul Anderson PLANET reprint, Alan Dean Foster, & more. 2nd (November) has a lead novel by Joe & Jay Haldeman. Each issue one novel (35-40,000), one novelet, shorts. Still most stories bought for either mag are by unknowns. 7 in current issue, rendering UNEARTH a bit of a joke.'

1-13-78 Received an address and advertising rate sheet from Dragonwood Press who are now, apparently, on the verge of resuming publishing DELAP'S F&SF REVIEW after it was tied up in legal difficulties because of disagreements with its previous publisher, Fred Patten.

Dragonwood promises an extensive attempt to promote circulation. Lots of luck.

Depending on your needs, write Richard Delap, editor, P.O. Box 46572, West Hollywood, CA 90046, or

Lydia Marano, publisher, DRAGONWOOD PRESS, P.O. Box 46572, West Hollywood, CA 90046.

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

Jan. 2, 1978

'I really liked the heavy interviews issue. An excellent addition was the Silverberg prefaces which, believe it or not, I had thought of suggesting to you for reprint anyway. In the intro to THE SEED OF EARTH, though, he perpetuates one more misconception which ought to be corrected somewhere along the line.

'This is the one about how sf overexpanded c. 1953 and killed off its market. (I have heard the advent of television adduced to explain the death of the sf-mag boom, and that one won't wash either.) The truth is that ALL the magazines got in serious trouble this time, not just the sf mags which had "overexpanded." LIFE and LOOK and the SATVEPOST faltered and began to die, and -- hmm? -- wasn't that about the time COLLIER'S died with a circulation of around three million? And ALL the pulps went under almost overnight. And the mag business has never truly recovered from what happened, and mag fiction was already beginning to breathe its last.

'What happened? Read two paragraphs on the middle of the page on p.31 of "The Publishing of Science Fiction" in Bretton's SCIENCE FICTION: TODAY AND TOMORROW, Penguin, 1975. Ignore Pohl's addendum about TV weakening the mag ad market; sf mags never had any ads to speak of anyhow. What happened was that the benign monopoly of the ANC was destroyed overnight, leaving mag distribution in a state of chaos from which it has never, ever recovered. Almost overnight every major American city wound up with its own little petty dictator telling the New York (and other) publishers what they could and could not get into their city. The Mafia of course moved in heavy and controls most cities, but not on any nationally organized plan. You have to fight your way into Dallas or Denver one mag at a time. Leo Margulies told me before he died that there was a period in which Kable News could not get one bleeping copy of MIKE SHAYNE into Denver or Salt Lake. Right now the Levy Company's Computer Book Service and Larry Flynt of HUSTLER are fighting like hell to break this system of local monopolies. CBS is doing it by selling over the heads of the locals via the chain stores (selling paperbacks to Sears HQ in Chicago rather than to each city's individual stores); this has led to retaliations and will again (ICD/Hearst pulled all Avon Books out of Levy's home base area of Chicago, for instance). Now Flynt is doing it -- I am not sure just how. He is selling over the head of the American Restaurant Association, which controls San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange County, Frisco, and for all I know Portland and Seattle; and somehow he has the muscle to do it. Who his backer is I do not know but it must be somebody with moxie. Anyhow, there are organized challenges to the system of little local monopolies, and when the air clears

there might be some changes in the mag business.

'Anyhow, to make a long story short, sf died because everything else died. And now we have a nation of specialty mags about autos and surfing and photography and split beaver, but no general mags at all to speak of. And no fiction mags at all. Fiction apparently -- short fiction, anyhow -- was a hot-house flower and could not survive the transplant.

'Let me echo everything Marion Zimmer Bradley had to say on p.83 of SFR 23 about "James Tiptree" and the Nebula/Hugo awards for "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" And, by the way, ship MZB a bouquet. It seems I have been wrong about the lady and I apologize. And I cannot think of but two things than I'd consider more shameful than voting for that story, and one of them is writing it and the other is writing an adoring feminist preface to the collection of "Tiptree" in which it appeared. Any respect I might have had for Ursula Le Guin just went utterly out the window, the way it would if I discovered a party-line article of hers in the VOELKISCHER BEOBSACHTER praising Himmeler for being Aryan. Now that I know where things stand I can say flatly that I will never again spend another nickel on a collection, or magazine, in which a story be either appears. Life is far, far too short old buddy, for Heil Steinem! or whatever. Or for paying some degenerate for the favor of denigrating me because of my sex (male) or my color (white) or my nationality (American) or my ethnic background (anglo) or the religion of my forefathers (Protestantism) or my sexual orientation (heterosexual) or the place of my birth (the American southeast) or my place among the sociological statistics (paterfamilias of a small family) or my status vis-a-vis Yahweh & Co. (goysch but not hostile).'

((Some readers liked the extra interviews, others did not. Four interviews in one issue tend to be too much, sometimes, depending on the length and type. I'm unlikely to run that many again at one time. They do make a big splash on the cover, though, don't they?

((Your information on the behind-the-scenes nitty-gritty grim realities of publishing and distribution is fascinating and reinforces my belief that economic/power factors underlie most surfaces in our society and culture. Sometimes I fancy myself a social detective as I ask the eternal question: WHO BENEFITS? when considering current events.

((I'm not as sensitive as you, I suppose, in re the feminism and apparent man-hate in some sf. If I refused to read the fiction of all the writers with whom I take issue...I'd read very little sf. My concern is not especially the content, as the skill. I might decry certain trends in sf, and hypocrites, but from my essentially "alien" Observer role, they become fascinating of Event and Phenomena. In short, Good Writing weighs more than Wrong Thinking. I read the introduction Ursula wrote for STAR SONGS OF AN OLD PRIMATE, and didn't find it objectionable or even Feminist. So it goes.))

'BOOKSWEST is all but dead. I got off the boat right after the rats. In a year of reviewing paperbacks I must say I had a higher regard for the sf people sent me than for most of the other categories, but God almighty, was most of it a bum read. There were a few acceptable mysteries (I recommend Gregory McDonald very highly) and a few decent thrillers, but the only things I read all year that had any promise as "literary" entities were HAULIN' by Phillip Finch (a very promising book about the long-distance trucking business) and THE DISCRETION OF DOMINICK AYRES by Mathew Vaughn (a kinky thriller set in Victorian England, worth reviewing in SFR perhaps). Of course these two were allowed to die on the vine by Pocket. On the lighter side were a comic romp, SPITBALLS AND HOLY WATER by James F. Donohue, which I shouldn't have liked but

died, and KILMAN'S LANDING, a truly superior cliffhanger by William Judson, who writes like a new Cornell Woolrich.'

1-25-78 The November GALAXY at least presented a decent face to the public with Wendy Pini's cover illustrating Zelazny's THE COURTS OF CHAOS.

But the Dec./Jan. issue is the pits as JJ Pierce, the new editor, is forced to resort to amateur art work due to the extreme reluctance of professional, skilled artists to work for a corporation with such a bad reputation for paying contributors only if forced by legal means (or threat of suit).

Latest word is that Steve Fabian will be back in GALAXY (or on the cover, or both) in the spring.

In the fiction area, GALAXY is into running a Name-writer serial with usually bad shorter fiction by relative or outright unknowns. The columns and letters are more attractive and readable, usually.

The Del Rey paperback line is beginning to practice what I thought might happen a few issues ago, when I suggested that the sf publishers have enough good books to reprint now to take care of each new generation of readers. New novels, especially by new writers, will be few and far between.

The Del Rey paperback list for February has one new sf novel, Jack Chalker's WEB OF THE CHOZEN, and one new fantasy, THE RIDDLE-MASTER OF HED by Patricia A. McKillip.

The other four releases are reprints: TO RIDE PEGASUS by Anne McCaffrey, BETWEEN PLANETS by Robert A. Heinlein, STAR LIGHT by Hal Clement, and WHEN THE WORLD SHOOK by H. Rider Haggard.

As economic times get tougher for publishers, lists will be cut and reprints emphasized.

(Although, to be frank, this may not happen, because as people are forced to stay home more because they can't afford to drive the car much and can't afford to go to the movies and restaurants as much, they may actually read more, and buy a pocketbook to while away the time...provided they get bored to tears by standard TV fare. But I wouldn't bet on this happening-- TV moguls are spicing up their programs with lots more sex and realistic drama and comedy, and will continue this trend to hold their audiences.)

RIGHT NOW I'M
ON CLAUDE NINE



'Overheard in a local bookstore: "Definition of a paranoid schizophrenic: Somebody who doesn't trust themselves." --Steve Brown

Perfectly true. Alter and I never have trusted each other.

will recall the papacy near the end of the 18th century, and it will seem to be a fatal calamity, yet miraculously the papacy will recover". He made this prediction 100 years in advance. In 1798, the Pope was taken prisoner by Napoleon's army and died in prison. At the time, many people thought the papacy was finished.

'My belief in the validity of Biblical inspiration* rests primarily on what I have seen as the reliability of Bible prophecy, interpreted according to the historicist school. In fact, if the prophecies could be shown to be mistaken, I would no longer have a reasonable basis for being a Christian. My faith is based on this data. (I do not believe faith is something you have in the absence of facts; I think it is something you do in consequence of facts, you see.)

'This has been a rather extensive digression into the subject of Bible prophecy. But I thought I'd level with you so you could see where I'm coming from. And I stress the fact that my concept of faith is based on facts, and the primary facts for me are the exact fulfillments of prophecies in the Bible interpreted by the historicist school, which I stress again is the only system of interpretation that is objective, allowing the Bible to interpret itself, and not reading fanciful interpretations into it, like all the modern schools of prophetic interpretation do.

'Thus I believe I can defend my claim to objectivity, open-mindedness, and scientific rationality despite my profession of Christianity. And my tendency to favor creationism is not the product of prejudice or conservative narrow-mindedness, but of intellectual honesty and freedom of thought.'

*'I do not believe in verbal inspiration like the Baptists do. God did not write the Bible, men did, and while God inspired them, that inspiration only made them His penmen, not his pen.'

((I disagree. There is a media resurgence of fundamentalist dogmatic hype (it sells NATIONAL ENQUIRERS and makes for good scare articles in TIME and NEWSWEEK and etc.) but noise and exposure doesn't necessarily mean a power-base. The real power centers won't give any real control of this country to Bible thumpers!))

((Uh-huh. I'll give some serious attention to Bible prophecy

when a 'historicalist' puts out some specific, about-to-happen predictions based on Bible quotations. (Give or take ten years.)

((If you have facts, why do you need faith? But I'm woefully ignorant of 'historicalist' Bible interpretation. More data, please. Something like a historical record of predictions made ahead of time and confirmed by events. No after-the-fact 'recognitions of prophesy' allowed. In short, put your facts where your mouth is.

((Obviously, the Devil is inspiring me to write this.))

'BY HIS SECOND BOOK, IT WAS CLEAR THAT CASTENADA WAS MAKING UP THE CONVERSATIONS. IT'S A HOAX. JOYCE CAROL QATES NOTICED IT IN 1972, AND WESTON LABARRE, THE MOST DISTINGUISHED RESEARCHER IN THE PEYOTE FIELD, CALLED CASTENADA A CHARLATAN WITHOUT MNCING AROUND. CASTENADA AS A NOVELIST HAS THE RIGHT TO TRY A LONG NOVEL IN PARTS WITH AN IMAGINARY MEXICAN SHAMAN AS A HERO, WHY NOT? ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE THE ONES EMBARRASSED. THE ANTHROPOLOGY DEPT. AT U.C.L.A. GAVE CASTENADA A DOCTORATE IN 1973 FOR "JOURNEY TO IXTLAN," THE MOST FAKED OF HIS BOOKS.

---Robert Bly, reviewing THE SECOND RING OF POWER, NY TIMES BOOK REVIEW, Jan. 22, 1978

1-26-78 Sometimes it don't pay to go to the post office.

CARD FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
January 24, 1978

'For the love of GOD Montessori! er, I mean Dick. You certainly have a creative way with typos. You don't just make a standard goof like "potscrad" for "postcard," no... It seems you have an infallible sense for dropping or changing a single syllable which alters the whole meaning of a letter. A line written as "I lose patience with the inarticulate" came out as "I loose patience with the articulate." This doubtless has my detractors rolling in the aisles, proclaiming that at last I had shown my true colors.

'I'll be in ANDROMEDA #3, by the way. I'm also glad to see there will be a major Leibner piece there. That means I'll be completely overshadowed, of course, but at least I'll be overshadowed by the best.'

((A talent for crucial typos is rare and should be treasured...right?))

#LETTER FROM RON LAMBERT
December, 1977

'There is a sinister resurgence of the forces of fundamentalism and dogmatic religion these days, and it is altogether likely that within a few years the religionists could gain the upper hand again and dominate our culture as they did during the medieval ages. If that happens, then the major pressure we would feel limiting our mental freedom would come from the fundamentalists and such (and that probably would mean the creationists, too). But that isn't the case at present.

'(Don't misunderstand what I mean by the previous paragraph--I am a Christian myself, and I certainly do not mean to say that religion itself is evil. But when people make evil use of religion, as they did during the Dark Ages, I think that is a far more dangerous thing than the intellectual dominion of secularism and agnosticism that we are used to.)

'According to the historicist school of prophetic interpretation (the only one that is not subjective, and the one that was considered orthodox by all Christians until only about four hundred years ago), certain prophetic symbols in the Bible seem to depict a back-and-forth struggle between false religion (the "King of the North") and anti-religion (the "King of the South") for dominion over the minds of people in Earth's leading societies. For what it may be worth to you, the prophecies indicate that the King of the North will ultimately overthrow the King of the South, and humanism, agnosticism, atheism, secularism and all that will go by the boards, and a confederation of (false) religions will hold sway. This will set the stage for the final battle for men's minds and the last act in the conflict between good and evil on Earth.

'Sir Isaac Newton, by the way, adhered to the historicist school of prophetic interpretation, and it was on the basis of this system of interpretation that he correctly (along with hundreds of other scholars before and after him) predicted that "some terrible calamity

'Regarding the letter from Robert P. Barger in which he asks for an article on Piper, I had ambitions to do such an article at one time, inspired by Patrouch on Asimov. I finally gave up but I did do a lot of research and my bibliography may be of some interest.

'What follows is a list of Piper's work in chronological order with such notes as seem appropriate

1. "Time and Time Again"
ASTOUNDING, April 1947, 17 pages.
Anthologised in A TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION, Groff Conklin, Editor, Crown Publishers, 1948. Not included in the Berkley paperback edition.
2. "He Walked Around the Horses"
ASTOUNDING, April 1948, 18 pp.
Anthologised in WORLD OF WONDER Fletcher Pratt, Editor, Twayne Publishers, 1951.
3. "Police Operation"
ASTOUNDING, July 1948, 28 pp.
Anthologised in SPACE POLICE Andre Nornton, Editor World Publishing Co, 1956.
4. "The Mercenaries"
ASTOUNDING, March 1950, 21 pp.
5. "Last Enemy"
ASTOUNDING, August, 1950, 56 pp.
Anthologised in THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY John W. Campbell, Editor Simon & Schuster, 1952 Not included in Berkley paperback editions.
6. "Flight from Tomorrow"
FUTURE, Sept-Oct., 1950, 14 pp.
7. "Operation R.S.V.P."
AMAZING, Jan. 1951, 7 pp.
Anthologised in WORLD OF WONDER (see 2)
8. "Temple Trouble"
ASTOUNDING, April 1951, 29 pp.
9. "Day of the Moron"
ASTOUNDING, Sept. 1951, 28 pp.
10. "Genesis"
FUTURE, Sept. 1951
Anthologised in SHADOW OF TOMORROW, Frederick Pohl, Editor Permabooks (Doubleday) P236, 24 pp.
11. ULLR UPRISING
THE PRITIFIED PLANET, Twayne Publishers, 1952, 122 pp.
Reprinted in an abridged version in SPACE SCIENCE FICTION, Feb. and March issues, 1953.
12. NULL-ABC with John J. McGuire
ASTOUNDING, Feb&March issues, 1953, 85 pp. Reprinted by Ace as CRISIS IN 2140, D-227, 1957.

13. "The Return" with John J. McGuire
ASTOUNDING, Jan. 1954, 25 pp.
Anthologised in THE SCIENCE-FICTIONAL SHERLOCK HOLMES, Robert C. Peterson Editor, The Council of Four, 1950. Cole says the anthologised version is revised.
14. TIME CRIME
ASTOUNDING, Feb&March, 1955, 89 pp.
15. "Ominilingual"
ASTOUNDING, Feb. 1957, 38 pp.
Anthologised in PROLOGUE TO ANALOG, John W. Campbell, Editor Doubleday, 1962.
16. LONE STAR PLANET with John J. McGuire, FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, March 1957, 63 pp. Reprinted in very slightly expanded version by Ace as A PLANET FOR TEXANS D-299, 1958.
17. "The Edge of the Knife"
AMAZING, May 1957, 45 pages.
18. "The Keeper"
VENTURE, July 1957, 21 pages.
19. "Graveyard of Dreams"
GALAXY, Feb. 1958, 23 pages.
First part of JUNKYARD PLANET.
20. "Ministry of Disturbance"
ASTOUNDING, Dec. 1958, 39 pp.
Anthologised in SEVEN TRIPS THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, Groff Conklin, Editor. Fawcett Gold Medal, R1924, 1968
21. "Hunter Patrol" with John J. McGuire, AMAZING, May 1959, 26 pp.
22. "Crossroads of Destiny"
FANTASTIC UNIVERSE July 1959, 10 pp.
23. "The Answer"
FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, Dec. '59, 8pp.
24. "Oomphel in the Sky"
ANALOG, Nov. 1960, 39 pp.
25. FOUR-DAY PLANET
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1961, 211 pp.
26. "Nuadsonce"
ANALOG, Jan. 1962, 39 pp.
27. "A Slave is A Slave"
ANALOG, April 1962, 59 pp.
28. LITTLE FUZZY
Avon, F-118, 1962, 154 pp.
29. SPACE VIKING
ANALOG, Nov&Dec 1962 Jan&Feb 1963, 178 pp.
Reprinted by Ace, F-225, 1963.
30. JUNKYARD PLANET
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1963
Reprinted by Ace as THE COSMIC COMPUTER, F-274, 1964, 186 pp.
31. THE OTHER HUMAN RACE
Avon, G1220, 1964, 186 pp.
32. "Gunpowder God"
ANALOG, Nov. 1964, 20 pp.
See 34

33. "Down Stoph!"
ANALOG, Nov. 1965, 45 pp.
See 34

34. LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN
Ace, F-342, 1965, 188 pp.

'Piper's stories seem to fall into two series, The Paratime Police series and A Future History series that I call the "Fuzzy" stories. Some stories belong to neither series. Some stories seem to belong to a particular series but there is no hard evidence, sometimes it is a matter of mood or philosophy. Piper seems to have been a very private person since there is almost nothing in print about him.'

'((Thanks, Bill, for your research. H. Beam Piper (according to the newly issued Vol 2 of THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY by Donald H. Tucker (Advent, \$85., Complete set \$50.)) was born in 1904 and died Nov. 11, 1964. Born in Altoona, PA, he was on the engineering staff of the Pennsylvania railroad and lived in the vicinity of Williamsport, PA. He committed suicide, reportedly because of family problems.))

LETTER FROM MARTY LEVINE

February 11, 1978

'SFR #24 arrived this week and I enjoyed it thoroughly, but you knew that already.

'My ulterior motive for this loc is to announce that the University of Michigan's literary magazine, THE MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW is preparing an issue about "The Moon Landing and its Aftermath: A decade's Retrospective on Space Consciousness". The deadline is November 1, 1978, and they're looking for essays, fiction, graphic works, memoirs, interviews, etc. on this theme. The address is:

'THE MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW
3032 Rackham Bldg
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109'



AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE SCITHERS

Conducted By **DARRELL SCHWEITZER**

SFR: How's ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE doing?

SCITHERS: Well. Very well. We have been selling around 60,000 copies per issue on the newsstands. We're following what I am told is a very typical pattern for a new magazine, with the second issue selling less than the first, and the third issue being rebound. We can't say right now whether the third issue has sold better than the first. If it is not better, it is not much worse.

SFR: Why do you think this magazine is succeeding when so many others haven't?

SCITHERS: A couple of things. Isaac's name is a very good initial draw. The publisher is well enough staffed to be able to follow the circulation, which means really following the complicated figures that come from the distributor, make the necessary recommendations to change the distribution patterns, follow up with the distributor. The publisher has enough financial solidity to be able to assure me an adequate budget for buying artwork, and above all for buying stories and paying for them on time, on acceptance.

SFR: How much of the success has to do with giving the audience the kind of science fiction they want, as opposed to the kind the unsuccessful magazines have been giving them?

SCITHERS: That's a damn good question...The kind of science fiction that I think will sell, that Isaac thinks will sell, happens to be the kind of science fiction that both of us seem to enjoy. This means something of an avoidance of futurity type stories. This means a weakness for a very short but punning or one-shot funny ending story. I would say it's partly a matter of simple luck that some of my tastes seem to match what the audience out there likes. Notice I'm carefully not saying my others fail, because I don't know.

SFR: Would you explain what you mean by a futurity story?

SCITHERS: In a broad sense, I'm competing for beer money--Paul Anderson's phrase--and I want to get the money that the potential reader could otherwise spend for a beer.

I am trying to get this beer money from the audience and in turn I must entertain the audience. Now, life happens to be full of pointless futurity, and many young people in their teens and early twenties suddenly come to grips with this, suddenly come to realize that life is terribly futile. Most of them outgrow it, you understand. But most of the audience already knows there is a lot of futurity and they don't want to be reminded of a situation where a lot of effort is wasted in real life--fixing the washing machine and then it breaks for a reason totally unrelated to the effort, spending thousands of dollars to fix up the car and having it run into. This is the kind of thing they don't want to be reminded of, and to escape into an enjoyable reading world one has to put away some of the grimy realities and take a look at how things might be, how they should be. There's a strong difference between pointless futurity and tragedy, and even a good tragedy is something I will buy only sparingly. It's not all fun and games, but the overall feel of the magazine has to be relieved strain, relieved gloom. A few pieces of solid tragedy embedded in all the fun and games are all the stronger for that. A pointless futurity can drag down a whole magazine.

SFR: Some other types of fiction turn a candid admission of the seamy side of life into a selling point. I don't mean true confessions, but the so-called "mainstream". How is science fiction sufficiently different that it sells by denying the everyday facts of life rather than exploring them?

SCITHERS: Your premise is wrong. SATURDAY EVENING POST consistently outsold the doom and gloom type of fiction magazines. It eventually collapsed for reasons other than the fact it had a large circulation. I think that overall the cheerful

NOW THERE'S A CLASS ACT;
A SELF-DESTRUCTING RE-
SECTION SLIP!



story and the meaningful tragedy outsell, outpull the futile--ending with a futile character and futile setting in all genres of fiction.

SFR: How much should the writer design the content and structure of his story with the purpose of selling? In this case, suppose the author is sincerely a nihilist?

SCITHERS: Well, if he's sincerely a nihilist, then fine. He could be a republican too, but when one is writing for money, one has to write for money.

SFR: Which does mean tailoring the contents to what will sell?

SCITHERS: It's a combination. To a large extent one must tailor one's content to what will sell. To a lesser extent one finds the market where one's natural inclinations seem to match the market.

SFR: Do you think there's a wide enough range in science fiction for all of this, or does it have to be cheerful to sell?

SCITHERS: Again, I buy more cheerful stories than tragedies. I don't buy the pointless futurity, and I suspect in general the readers don't like it. I think of all fiction the cheerful will probably outsell--in numbers of stories sold--the tragedies. However, an unrelieved diet of cheerful stories gets awful boring. Now, restate the question because I think there's part of it I missed.

SFR: If your magazine starts in-

sisting on cheerful stories, and everybody else does it, won't this limit the science fiction field to something less than the full range of possible expression?

SCITHERS: You keep not listening. I say that I will buy more cheerful than tragedy, but I cannot live entirely on the cheerful stories, nor can the reader. I would suspect that a well-run magazine would tend to do the same thing. I really feel that the pointless futility story has little market anywhere. There may be editors who want to throw one in now and then, but this type of story, which I've got a bit of a block against, is I think, sufficiently uncommercial that it's not really worthwhile for the writers to spend much time with them.

SFR: You may be right. I've noticed that the "literary" mainstream, as opposed to category "best sellers" has had a vast preoccupation with what you would call the futility story. At the same time the market for the "literary" short story has virtually disappeared. Do you think this is direct cause and effect?

SCITHERS: I don't know the field well enough to hazard a guess. From what I have said, it would sound that way, but again, I don't know that field well enough to hazard a guess.

SFR: While we're on the subject, what are the other restrictions for the magazine, in the way of approach or subject matter?

SCITHERS: Okay, a story which is meant to be read by an adolescent male onehanded, while the other hand is busy elsewhere--in other words a story in which sex is introduced solely for arousal, is a kind of story that I don't want to buy, and for that matter there are higher paying markets for that kind of story elsewhere. A story which is completely and solidly fantasy, no, because the particular market I'm working with seems to like science fiction and some of the borderline areas of science fiction, but for reasons that have never been clear to me, the kind of audience I'm going for is simply not interested in pure fantasy. Stories which have no science fiction content at all, of course, are basically stories I'm not interested in. And in all these things, in my definition of fantasy, in my definition of no science fiction, it's pretty much a subjective decision on my part.

SFR: What do you think science fiction should be?

SCITHERS: Other people have defined it better than I. As far as what it should be, it should be an exploration of many, possibly all, plausible futures. Not all possible futures because the scope is broader than that. All plausible futures, all believable futures, and to some extent plausible, scientifically-effected presents or pasts as well.

SFR: Isn't it more a case of believable than plausible? For example, THE TIME MACHINE is not the slightest bit plausible, but while we're reading it it's believable.

SCITHERS: We'll have to dig into the dictionary of synonyms. I was using plausible in the sense of made believable for the moment.

SFR: Where do you stand on scientific fudging in a story?

SCITHERS: If the fudge is necessary for the story to work, and if it's deftly done, sure. A scientific fudge which is unnecessary--uh-uh. Let's do our science right. Let's limit ourselves to one impossible thing, and concentrate on making that one impossible thing believable. But fudging on peripheral matters is pretty much the sign of a lazy writer.

SFR: What do you mean by the impossible thing? The Apollo 11 landing was impossible in 1962, but they could have said then it was foreseeable within ten years. How far are you going in the range of impossible?

SCITHERS: Oh, all kinds of things are impossible, and they're definitely grist for science fiction. In 1961 you could write a story which made a convincing case for a landing on the moon in 1962. After all, it was a matter of engineering detail and engineering advance, not whole new avenues of scientific thought that were required to make the landing on the moon possible. But the question of impossibility is not that important. For the central lie, for the central wonder of a story, the degree of impossibility is no particular barrier. The key is whether that one impossible thing can be made believable for the duration. Impossibilities on peripheral matters are simply matters for reference to the history books, the scientific handbooks and the like.

SFR: Do you think science fiction serves any function beyond making something impossible believable for

the purpose of the story and entertaining the reader thereby? Is it likely to influence anyone?

SCITHERS: Well, obviously to the extent that I snatch people's beer money. To that extent the incidence of alcoholism is cut down. To the extent that science fiction persuades people to enter into the sciences, hard and soft, to the extent that it shows people of the nature of science and research, to this extent it serves a very definite social benefit.

SFR: Would you buy a technophobic story?

SCITHERS: If it were believable, and fun, probably.

SFR: Somewhat off the subject, what is your background in science fiction?

SCITHERS: Since 1959 I have edited and published an amateur magazine (AMRA) which has run now 67 issues, and I have sold three short stories to the science fiction magazines, and I have done a little bit of other professional writing.

SFR: What's your educational background?

SCITHERS: Four years at the United States Military Academy, four years at Ieland Sanford University in various graduate courses, mostly in electrical engineering.

SFR: What is your literary background? What do you read?

SCITHERS: Nowadays, a lot of very bad science fiction. Prior to that, in fiction, primarily science fiction, and in scientific work trying to keep abreast of such magazines as SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

SFR: Do you think it is important for a science fiction writer to be well read in other forms of fiction and in classics, by which I mean everything from Homer onward?

SCITHERS: Is it important? Not very. Should they? Yes.

SFR: At what point does science fiction become inbred because everybody derives everything from previous science fiction stories?

SCITHERS: Well, when the ideas are reruns of old science fiction stories. Okay, since my own background is not strong in literary matters, but rather in scientific, therefore I tend to concentrate more on the idea content than the literary con-

tent, except in the amateur's "I like what I see. I like the way he puts together words". So I would be more sensitive to inbred ideas than inbred styles. Inbred style of course is something to be avoided, but I don't have the background to be as aware of it as I possibly should.

SFR: Are you pleased with the quality of material that is being submitted to you?

SCITHERS: I'm pleased with the best of it, and unhappy that the best of it is such a small percentage of the overall flow.

SFR: Does this mean that there are more markets than there are good stories to fill them?

SCITHERS: Sometimes I am afraid this is so. However, I think the supply of stories can be expanded to match the markets.

SFR: Isn't there a problem that everybody is writing novels, not short stories?

SCITHERS: Well, the 15-year-old who sent me a story six months ago and made his first sale isn't up to writing novels at this point. Sure, there are a lot of the old names who are busy writing novels. There are a lot of new writers who haven't got that far, and while they're getting to the point of noticing that novels are a profitable way to make a living, maybe they'll learn their way and provide us with some entertaining short stories along the way. I suspect that the magazine field is always going to be one of fairly high turnover, of people who get into it, write out a few ideas, and then find other things in life to do, or people who get into it, write short stories, gradually work up to the more profitable novels--a number of possibilities.

SFR: Between the time the new writers you have discovered start to become well-known and then after the well-known ones have graduated to novels, what do you do for major names to put on the cover?

SCITHERS: The new ones become major names with exposure. It's that simple.

SFR: Can they do it fast enough? I note there are only four names on the cover of the fourth issue.

SCITHERS: There may be four names on the cover, but there are something like twelve or thirteen on the table of contents. I'm trying to unclutter the cover, frankly.

SFR: It seems to me that the field is presently in a kind of invisible crisis, because the markets are expanding and not enough good stuff is being written. Much of what is being published, while minimally acceptable, is not outstanding. Would you agree?

SCITHERS: Is it currently in a crisis? Well, it's a little bit silly of me to say, because I've looked at what is coming in the mailbox for a little bit over a year, and people who have been looking at it for ten or fifteen years can more easily say if it is currently in a crisis. On the basis of one year's look, and a changing frequency of publication during that time, I can't say whether this is a temporary situation, whether this is something of a statistical fluctuation, or whether there is a shortage of manuscripts which is a serious and increasing thing. I don't have the time data to say.

SFR: Should your publisher decide to make the magazine a monthly, would you be able to fill the pages?

SCITHERS: This week, no. Three months from now, I hope so.

SFR: You mean you hope that more people will submit as they learn the magazine is going to be around for a while?

SCITHERS: Not only more people submit as they learn the magazine is going to be around for a while, but more people who are at the status of almost but not quite being bought, graduate with that abrupt shift to professional quality that seems to happen to a lot of people, the hope that a lot of people we're encouraging now but who are not quite making it will shift up to solid professional status.

SFR: Do you think the work of the editor with the writer can be responsible for this change?

SCITHERS: It helps. It helps a lot. There are many writers who simply cannot be helped. There are many writers who are going to get good enough to buy almost without respect to what good or bad advice an editor may give them.

SFR: What do you do to encourage new writers?

SCITHERS: I think the magazine gives more individual comment, although it is usually on the order of one to five sentences on a card. We give more individual comment than any of the other science fiction magazines. Some of the comment, unfortunately, is pretty blunt, but some of the stories we get need to have their writers shaken up in order that those writers can ever improve.

SFR: Wouldn't you agree on general principle that anybody who can't take a shake is never going to make it anyhow?

SCITHERS: I suspect that's the case.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Scithers.

'STUDENTS DEMANDING AN END TO FAILING GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL ATTACKED POLICEMEN, PUT UP STREET BARRICADES AND SET BUSES ABLAZE SATURDAY IN ROME, AUTHORITIES SAID. THEY SAID 30 STUDENTS WERE ARRESTED, BUT NO INJURIES WERE REPORTED.' RESPONDING TO A CALL BY A MARXIST GROUP, 'THE SECONDARY-SCHOOL STUDENTS DEMANDED THAT TEACHERS, TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN OF POORLY EDUCATED FAMILIES, STOP GIVING GRADES LOWER THAN 6 ON THE SCHOLASTIC 10-POINT SCALE. 'SIX IS THE MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR PASSING.'

--Associated Press
Feb 26, 1978



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS----

THREE VIEWS

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A SPIELBERG KIND

By Jack L. Chalker

Jack Chalker's novels: MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS, THE IDENTITY MATRIX (to be published), DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW (to be published).

I've discovered a valuable fringe benefit to being a professional science fiction writer: if a big-push, big budget SF film is to be premiered, you get in free. Although CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND didn't get the major city premieres of a STAR WARS (no free champagne), I still saw it the night before it opened, and my feelings about it are mixed.

First of all, anyone expecting to see another STAR WARS will be disappointed. Even though Doug Trumbull spent almost \$13 million on his special effects, it only proves that Trumbull is going to have some fat Swiss bank accounts while John Dykstra will go to the artistic poorhouse. This is not to say that the special effects are poor or inadequate for the film (although there's a little sloppi-

ness there that shouldn't be for that kind of money), just that the effects are neither grandiose as you might expect nor as grandiose as he might have made them. The "living cloud" effect, for example, one of the best in the film, is accomplished using a video-tape dub and a chroma-key; it has been done on tight television budgets. And instead of getting a lot of aliens touching a lot of humans, a la the script and novelization, we get one alien mistily for a few seconds, the same one in clear stop-motion for about eleven seconds, and a lot of murky shadows.

It would also have been nice if Trumbull had been a little more careful with his scale; he blows the film's best visual effect---the coming-in of the mother ship---by having it in three different scales in three consecutive scenes. Even so, we owe the special effects man one big debt of gratitude for the mother-ship, in that the script and novelization do not make anything more of it than as a huge mother-ship.

The fact is, Trumbull visually gives you a nice understated interpolation of the alien lifestyle. The mother ship isn't a ship, it's an orbiting and star-roving city, a free city in flight a la Blish. This is their home, and it's obvious. This is simply not a planet-bound civilization. The "flying saucers" as such are quite obviously one-man scouts, which accounts for their small size in UFO reports.

The John Williams score is surprisingly unobtrusive; except for the alien communication scene, you are simply not aware of it. I say 'surprisingly' not just because Williams is a brilliant scorer and the best successor to Bernard Herrmann we have, but because the score, on its own (Arista AL-9500, soundtrack, the composer conducting) is an extremely fine one, a much better unified piece of creative music than that marvelous parody of classical scores, STAR WARS. Anyone with a really good hi-fi system (the saucer plays a mean bass) will sit up and take notice, and any who appreciate good music will be impressed. This man is really good; I shall have to seek out his pure classical compositions. However, the score is not without its STAR WARS echoes, including "The Conversation" between humans and mother-ship, which is a theme and variations on Charles Ives' THE UNANSWERED QUESTION and,

as such, a very funny classical music joke, much more so than the polytonal reorchestration of "When You Wish Upon A Star" which is obviously a Spielberg invention. The overall score, though, is William's sincere tribute to the late master, Bernard Herrmann, and Herrmann echoes, along with BH's greatest idol, Ives, abound.

Oh, yes---what about the film?

Well... Depends on how you look at it. From the viewpoint of the spectator, knowing nothing about the film in advance except that it's a flying saucer story, it's very entertaining, has a lot of very funny lines nicely times (example: the two farmers observing the absurdist vision of three Indiana State patrol cars chasing a UFO down a road and remarking, "They may be able to fly rings around the moon but we're years ahead of them on the free-ways."), and, if the Dreyfuss character is extremely overdone, we can forgive it. It is too episodic and disjointed for 100% concentration (you rarely see people leaving for popcorn in the midst of STAR WARS but you can leave for such---and many do---at slow points in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and not miss a thing) but it's good, and the last 30 minutes are riveting. The whole thing is extremely well directed; Spielberg knows his business, as anyone who's ever seen DUEL can attest.

he kidnapping of Barry is a genuinely effective scene, as is Dreyfuss's Close Encounter where Spielberg has the viewers for breakfast, but you really wish that woman would snack that kid. The problem with the Dreyfuss character is that he's a nut beforehand; a permanent adolescent, and, as such, when he goes even battier nobody can identify with him, and most of the viewers, who knew what he went through and why, still would have voted to lock him up by the time he starts digging up the garden (and I wonder how much Budweiser paid for that complete beer commercial?)

The humor is good and nicely understated; I loved their moving in the whole international contact team in Piggly Wiggly and Baskin Robbins trucks, and the like. The pacing, however, is uneven; the scenes without Dreyfuss are much more interesting than the ones featuring him until his run for Devil's Tower.

From Spielberg's point of view, I judge the film a flop---although he, being too close to it, probably wouldn't realize it. He said repeatedly that the primary theme of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is how the government can control you, manipulate



you, and any damned thing it wants with you. This theme is certainly a serious one, and it is in the film, but it is so weakened by the events as to be buried. It's even debatable in the end, since, when the First Contact comes, it is glaringly obvious that the people on the scene are the best qualified people to be on the scene at that point, and that if the whaksos and common folk who tried to get there had all made it, they'd have made an unholly mess of things. The aliens want representative random people--great from their point of view. We, however, are better served by a trained corps of scientists-astronauts. Throwing Dreyfuss in at the end is a sop to the alien and a mark of respect for his ability to make it through all those obstacles. And the aliens obviously wanted the team and governments to be the ones they meet first---the code key and recognition symbols had to be properly done before the mother-ship would come in at all.

Some criticism has been made of the film in that the army allowed the thing to take place peaceably, let it come in and leave. This may disappoint anti-military folks, but it's not necessarily so. The fact is, the Baltimore-Washington area is the government; about six million people are around here, and roughly one-third are government employees, bureaucrats, etc. That sort of criticism isn't heard here---they did it just the way the bureaucracy would act.

And even on a practical level, the military is facing a possible threat of unknown forces but with vastly superior technology. Considering how technologically superior the aliens are, and how impossible they've been to catch in the last 30 years, they would lick their chops at the potential of getting into all that technology and give peace a chance first. Whether or not they would have the same view if the aliens had decided to land in Siberia is something else again. Or didn't it also land in Siberia? If the U.S. government can pull off a Wyoming meet in secrecy, then how much easier elsewhere? It makes no difference. The potential gains outweigh the risks.

Should you see it? Yes, I think so. You'll be entertained even as you carp. Will you see it more than once, like STAR WARS? Al-most certainly not. Will the commercial success of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS coming on the heels of the commercial flop of STAR WARS generate more SF films? Probably not too many. Columbia, for example, approached a lot of folks in the busi-

ness (including me) about potential properties, but when you have a successful western loads of big westerns can be made in months. Ditto mysteries, spies, etc. But an SF film is its special effects, and those take time. Films rushed into production now will be 1979 and 1980 getting close to release. A lot of bad stuff will be done (SPACE PROBE from Disney, for example, will be visually stunning but doesn't even have a science advisor, and bears about as much relationship to reality and high-school physics as Wonderland does to World War II). Fortunately we have DAMNATION ALLEY around to prove that you have to do it right or you'll go broke.

Dykstra, for one, will take one look at what Trumbull collected for CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and the price of a class production will go through the roof. The banks in Switzerland will be pleased, and they will not invest the money in big-budget SF films....

THE GEORGE WARREN VIEW:

12/22/77 'We went to see CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE THIRD RATE today. I give Columbia Pix no more than a few months at the present rate. If the firm is counting on this tired piece of lukewarm '50s SATEVEPOST sci-fi (I use the term advisedly) to bail out the firm or even make back its nut I do hope nobody is standing on one leg waiting for this to happen. So-so acting, slow pace and sloppy editing, plus real B-movie direction and really LOUSY writing: a "Twilight Zone" reject if ever I saw one. The only saving grace was the pretty neo-Frank-Paul spaceship and the very Hannes Bok aliens, and they weren't around early enough to save the flick. Imagine: a 29-year-old gets to wreck the studio this time; shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in 3 generations...'

REG COMMENT: At first I liked CLOSE ENCOUNTERS a lot. But then niggling little puzzlements emerged. While you're viewing the film it moves along fast enough, and the acting is good enough, and the tension is high enough, that critical judgements are submerged.

But then---the next day....

#The idiocy of throwing all that dirt and those bricks and

plants throughout the kitchen window and building that replica of the Devil's Tower in the living room! (Why not the garage, the backyard?)

#Why were those lost WWII Navy planes set down in Mexico, and the pilots kept till later release? Why kidnap the little boy at all?

#Why did the mother ship appear to be as big or bigger than the Devil's Tower [a mountain!] in one shot, and then appear so relatively small as it settled down on the base?

#If that incredibly intense electro-magnetic force caused by the small scout UFOs could make every electrical appliance and toy in a house turn on and go bananas, why didn't it have an effect on the body/brains of humans? Wouldn't it have caused convulsions, at least headaches?

#Frankly, the aliens (the one shown in detail) didn't look like they were capable of the technology represented by the mother ship. The alien shown looked like a skinny version of Pilsbury's dough-boy in the TV commercials.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is a thin, weak movie. Its internal inconsistencies and goofs are too great to ignore. It is a statement of optimism and hope and all the goody-goody wishes of mankind, but it sucks. The hype and the hope have made it a brief hit. But I think word-of-mouth will thin audiences and the movie will not do as well as initially thought.

#Another puzzlement: how come those red-suited volunteers were ready to go with the aliens? How was it known they were wanted, would be accepted?

The movie is worth seeing. It pays off enough. But it is only a fair movie, an "interesting" movie, and probably a misconceived movie.



Early February

2-6-78 Significant news in the "Industrial Briefs" section of BUSINESS WEEK of Feb. 13, 1978:

'A typewriter that can turn out a printed page by substituting voice input for the keyboard is a goal of researchers around the world. Scientists at the Applied Research Institute at the University of Hokkaido in Japan now claim that they have...built a typewriter that stores the sounds of each of the fifty-one Kana letters in the Japanese phonetic alphabet. By comparing the words spoken into the typewriter with the stored patterns, the device can come up with a match in less than a second and with an average accuracy of 93%. Surprisingly, the Japanese expect to develop a commercial version within two years.'

Naow, if they kin onny kum oop weeth an Amurkun speekin' verhum for us, hyear. Fuggin macheen'd proolly spell words wrong...lak feet fer feat, 'n thangs like at.

Rotsa ruck!

The 'Statement of Ethical Position by the Worldcon Guest of Honor' (Harlan Ellison) which appeared in SFR last issue, and in LOCUS and a few other fanzines [printed but not commented upon], has brought some reaction.

Karl T. Pflock wrote a response and sent a copy to the Iguanacoon, to me, to LOCUS and to Harlan.

Karl's position is that the members of the worldcon who don't share the Goh's opinions in re ERA should not have to pay for that part of the convention devoted to promoting ERA.

Harlan, in a reply to Karl, (copies to SFR, LOCUS and Iguanacoon) belittles the argument and indulges in personal attack.

I presume these letters (plus maybe a short one of mine sent to Iguanacoon echoing my comments in SFR 24) and others will be printed in the Iguanacoon Progress Report #3. The relatively early appearance in the fan press of Harlan's statement allows for a kind of judgement on the matter to be made by the membership which the convention committee may wish to follow.

Harlan has not as of now decided to respond to my comments, for publication (or in private). However, John Shirley has sent a letter in support of Harlan's position, and that follows. Harlan did respond to David Pettus' letter in SFR 24, and that response appears after the Shirley letter.

'Ordinarily I avoid political issues. I hate politics and politicians and governments and rules generally. Johnny Rotten and I both want "to be anarchy."

'But there are some questions that seem to transcend politics and go right to the guts. (The guts being above the anus.) If there is such a thing as a *priori* truth in morality, then the equal rights issue resounds with that truth, resonates somewhere inside up. So I'm adamant about civil rights for minorities; racial minorities, and gays and religious minorities (though I wish I could find an excuse to persecute the Scientologists; I despise those grasping bastards)---but it's ironic that rights for women were not thoroughly recognized till after we'd begun balancing the scale for blacks, women are not a minority, really, and you'd have thought our enslavement of them would have been the number one issue in the atmosphere of egalitarian reformism. It's simply time to do something about it, and it's time for all of us. You accuse Harlan Ellison of buckling under to his "guilt." Damn right! Ellison's never pretended that he acted on reason before feeling; he's always been a human amplifier of emotions. Guilt is an emotion and it's justified for all of us. We ought to feel guilty, at least until we do something solid about the injustice we---all men---have helped perpetuate. Nature put guilt in to us for a reason, Geis. So maybe acting on feeling before reason---is reasonable. And I feel that Ellison's right about swinging the emphasis to support ERA at Worldcon.

'He's not foolish enough, I assume, to believe that Arizona is going to change its vote to support ERA simply because a few "Sci-Fi nuts" (as they probably think of us) are grouching and refusing to feed the state's coffers---but the Con nevertheless is the focus of more and more attention world-wide, and the symbolic support of future-lookers will make some ripples, media-wise. It could make a difference beyond Arizona. After all, it's the *Worldcon*.

'And why pretend, Geis, that SF cons are above a little issue-lobbying now and then. It's been done before---Anderson and Gunn and others are always using Cons to push NASA, and that's a political issue. Just ask the Congressional budget committee.

'Ellison can be childish and defensive, and I've had some asinine scraps with him (being at times childish and defensive myself). But in this he's right---we've got to "walk the walk." Too many of us are all talk and no action.'

(ERA, of course, is a socio-cultural-political-economic affair, and promises to radically re-structure woman's role in our society. A lot of older women don't want to have to cope with those changes, are content with the status quo, and oppose ERA. I suspect it is a matter of youth vs. age to a great degree.

As basic economic forces in this country---and other "electronic-age" countries---result in greater and greater proportions of women working, inevitable social-cultural pressures will insure the adoption or passage of an ERA type amendment or law-package. More and more women will seek and attain political office and other power positions. And very swiftly the social facade will reflect these basic power changes. It is an ongoing process.

(As a rule, I am leery of people who are ruled by their emotions. I don't approve of public breast-beating Guilt...or public Hate, or public Envy, or Pride... Not all emotions are "good" emotions.

(I don't agree that Harlan is ruled by his emotions. He uses his emotions, as we all often do.

(I reject Guilt of a social kind. I've got enough of a personal kind to work on, thanks.

(The difference between me and you/Harlan is in my view of sf, and perhaps our basic characters; I see sf as a private entertainment medium which can instruct and inculcate en passant, depending on the writer/artist. I am not a social person, not an activist. Not a "movement" activist. I write/observe and am committed to a set of beliefs which I promote in SFR and GALAXY, and in some fiction. But I do not and will not carry a placard and shout in a hall. You do your thing, I'll do mine. You have a very narrow view of 'action.'))

LETTER FROM HARLAN ELLISON

31 January 78

'Response to Open Letter from David Pettus in SFR #24

'Dear Mr. Pettus:

The answers to your questions should be obvious to anyone. That these questions keep getting asked, makes me shake my head in weariness. And that anyone should confuse these questions and their answers with the Realities of

Publishing is even more perplexing.
'Nonetheless. Here are your answers.

'1) If I contend that my writings are not sf, why do I accept Hugos and Nebulas when my stories win such awards? Simple. The publishers like to blazon such awards on the press releases for my books. Every time I win an award, I can count on my price for a book going up by predictable and charitable increments. It is a commercial consideration. I am not the Midnight Mission. I am not a charitable organization. I write for myself, but once having done the writing I demand the top dollar for it. Awards are just popularity contest tokens, and I don't put much stock in them ---with the exception of the Writers Guild awards, which are given strictly on the basis of merit by a jury of my peers in film and television.

'But further, when fans or professionals choose to select my work as meritorious, it would be gauche and shitty of me to refuse to accept the compliment. I don't like having my work categorized as that which it is not, but even when fans and pros understand this about me, and they still can get past their genre labels to laud something I've done, I take it as a genuine appreciation for the work. Thus I accept the awards out of gratitude and a sense of graciousness. The mythology that surrounds me seems to preclude any shows of gentlemanliness or manners on my part, though reporters such as Mark Mansell in SFR #24 note such behavior...always with a startled tone. The fact of the matter is that I respond to politeness and friendliness with like reactions; I respond to smartasses and rudeness with something quite different. Dick Geis can attest to this, if he chooses.'

((Of course. As noted in previous issues of SFR, Harlan, like most of us, reacts in kind...warmth with warmth, cold with cold, and if you shit on him he'll stuff you, head first, down the toilet, as soon as possible.))

'2) As for attending conventions, I haven't been to a WorldCon since Washington several years ago, when I decided I didn't like going to conventions. I was Guest of Honor at a NasFic because I had accepted the honor before my decision, and I try to keep my promises, though Alan Bechtold probably feels that's bullshit. I have been in attendance at several regional cons in the past five years for personal reasons---usually fulfilling obligations to friends who pressed me into service. My Guest of Honorship at the upcoming

ing Iguanacon was an obligation I took on in confusion about three years ago. I would have been delighted had the Phoenix fans found someone else subsequently. But since I said I'd do it...I'll do it. Apart from the Iguanon, however, I have no intention whatsoever of attending future conventions, regional or national, unless I am paid as if they were college speaking engagements. I make part of my living as a lecturer, and I accept whatever gigs can be scheduled at my going rate. I see no reason to exclude sf conventions as long as they are treated as professional engagements.

'I do, however, exempt the World Fantasy Convention. As a fantasist, I have every right and inclination to associate myself with the genre and its gathering. Others may find my making of this distinction a spurious one. I do not. I call myself a fantasist, and I feel comfortable with the appellation. Such is not the case with the words "science fiction writer." That magazines and publishers and tv listings and fans continue to call me that is a battle I'll no doubt be fighting forever.

((Especially if you write science fiction screenplays and sf TV scripts.))

'Nonetheless, I will fight it. And probably win, when I'm a hundred years old.

'I hope this answers your questions, sir.

'And for God's sake, disabuse yourself of that worthless attitude that you're a nobody. Christ, can't fans ever get past their feelings of ego-inadequacy?'

LETTER FROM ARNE EASTMEN February, 1978

'The Science Fiction Bookstore or Science Fiction Bookshop on 14th Street and 8th Avenue, Manhattan, New York, has boycotted or seen not

fit to keep SFR even though LOCUS is stocked. I have no time for this childishness. The last time I experienced it was when I had to apply for special permission to read Nietzsche and Machiavelli in High School. That's right! Freddie the Neech and Nickie the Mack were in a locked cabinet and I had to visit the principal to get a chit to read same. The HS was the HS of Commerce and this was the 50s.

'I don't need this shit. Now, or in the fifties. I subscribe. These people can go stuff their boycott.'

((When the SF Bookstore did stock SFR they regularly sold out 100 copies per issue. But then they abruptly returned an issue last year and when I enquired why said they had sent two notices to me that their order was cancelled. So they say. I never received any notice, and I will not believe the post office managed to lose both letters.

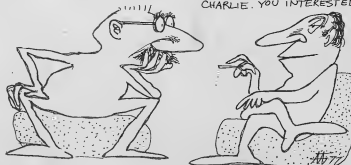
((When customers asked why no SFR, they were told it was because there was too much socio-political commentary in the magazine.

((When I asked why I was told it was because I was putting too much personal material into the magazine. The shop owners felt the magazine didn't pass a purity test and were protecting their customers. (Remarkable policy since the magazine regularly sold out and the customers didn't seem to want or need such protection.)

((The real reason for their refusing to carry SFR is unknown to me. Something I wrote in SFR? Probably.

((However their cancelled order hasn't really hurt me financially all that much---I sell more copies to bookstores now that I did then, and they are out a couple hundred dollars profit per year, at least. So as far as I'm concerned they are biting off their nose to spite their face, appear to be small-minded fools... BUT IT IS THEIR BOOKSTORE,

THE SECRET MASTERS OF
FANDOM HAVE AN OPENING
FOR A DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR,
CHARLIE. YOU INTERESTED?



and they have a right to refuse to sell anything they wish. Just as I have the right to print or not print anything I wish...and sometimes appear the fool for it.))

LETTER FROM GEORGE PETERSON, JR. February 3, 1978

'By far and away the best thing in issue #24 was Algis Budrys' "On Being a Bit of a Legend." I would really like to express much thanks to Mr. Budrys for sharing so much of himself in such intimacy and with so much unadulterated honesty---it really hit me right in the box where I live. I really felt refreshed---I felt here is a man who is not afraid to tell us about himself and who knows how to relate---who knows how I feel but I can't express. It was simply great. Thanks again and again Algis and thank you Dick for including it in this issue.

On another note, the announcement by Harlan Ellison: I want to thank you Dick for putting into words what I would, if I was as together as you are. Iguanacon will be my first worldcon or for that matter my first anythingcon and I'm desperately looking forward to it. I had paid to attend Midamericon in Kansas City but when it rolled around I found myself without funds to make the trip. This time I'm going to make it for sure and I want to go for one reason---to have a good time and enjoy myself, not to be embroiled in politics---demonstrations---and confrontations. Don't misunderstand me; I like Ellison and some of his works but it would not break my heart if he did boycott the convention---let him stay home and let me and possibly others like me come to Phoenix and enjoy the convention without controversy. I feel that since STAR WARS there has been a renewed interest in science fiction and fantasy, and the chaos he would bring would certainly do more harm than good. I only hope the convention committee will reconsider Ellison's proposal. Iguanacon will not fall apart if Ellison isn't there but might on the other hand have some serious complications that could disrupt and interfere with the convention as a whole.'

((I doubt Harlan will bring chaos, but there are elements in fandom who might want to use this ERA thing to rag him, maybe try to provoke him or...))

LETTER FROM IAN COVELL

1-24-78

'It strikes me that this society

associates great literature and great art and great lives only with pain, because its opposite is pleasure and we are conditioned to believe that pleasure breeds nothing but pleasure. We say 'pain teaches' but carry such an argument to the conclusion that only pain teaches. This extends to the tragedy as the ultimate artform---being so painful it must hence be the most correct way of depicting humanity who is at his best under stress and tension (unless it kills him). I wonder now if any author exists who can depict pleasure---pure pleasure if need be---in a constructive manner. Gunn tried it in his THE JOY MAKERS but had to obviate the antimoral point by starting it on a tragic note and underpinning pure joy with incipient destruction and tragedy. Hedonism must work.'

((Maybe hedonism is the only true, rational philosophy and lifestyle for people---and maybe that's why it is put down so much by all those who stand to lose money/power/status if it were followed by any large number of people? Our world is built on guilt, envy and shame. Without those emotions driving us, how many Belohfire Eighties would be sold? How many churches built? How many politicians elected?))

((As you say, great funny books do not win awards, nor do great funny men win Oscars---except when they are very old and near death.

((FANNY HILL will last as long as the English language, but it will never be honored as great literature.

((The road to awards is through treatments of death and power, not through sex. All a great sex novel will win is lots of money...or a jail term.))

2-8-78 The sex cover and big red title spread on the cover of the WRITER'S '78 YEARBOOK ["Writing for the Sex Market"] is a rip-off hype to spur sales. The actual article is lame, incomplete, half-assed, as William P. Noble tells of writing short stories for \$100. per (and as low as \$30.), and cannot give any detail or instruction on actually writing sex scenes (do's, don't's and maybe's) because the editors of the Writer's Digest Publications don't dare mention 'nipple' or 'erection' or like that.

Contemptible, meally-mouthed hypocrites.

LETTER FROM JOHN BOARDMAN 30 January, 1978

'I've always appreciated SFR, but I don't think I've ever got as deeply into any issue as I did into #23. That's because I am now in the process of reading aloud every word of it.

'The last time Ed Meskys was in New York, we were discussing fannish material available on tape for the blind. He says that ALGOL and LOCUS are taped but that to the best of his knowledge SFR is not. So I rather rashly volunteered to tape it for him and mail it up to New Hampshire. I have just about everything done by now except the Bradbury and Anthony interviews and a few of the reviews, but it has been long. SFR is solidly packed full of material---most of it interesting, though I find that a little of Robert Anton Wilson's conspiratorial and anri-scientific notions goes a very long way indeed.

'Ed and I are putting together a network of blind fans, among whom these and other tapes are being circulated. (I am reading the APA-Q mailings for him as well.) We have four or five people on it now---there is some doubt because one man is notorious for sending tapes back very late if at all, and we may not include him. If you have any names and addresses for this list, could you please send them?'

((See the letter from Mate Bucklin in SFR 24. And I presume you know of the GALAXY Volunteers program to help the blind of readers and fans.

((I wish you well with your reading, and am flattered that SFR is now rotting the minds of some of enthusiasts heretofore immune.))

AN ITEM OF INTEREST-----

'Do you know of anyone (or group) who might be interested in investing in a large work of handwoven art, depicting figures in space? This tapestry is eight feet high by eleven feet wide, an off-loom production during 1975 which was exhibited in an internationally competitive exhibition "Convergence 76" at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"Space is the Most Important Thing," formerly "The Weaver Women, subtitled A Hole in Space" is for sale. Slides are available on request.'

Laurie W. Johnson
P.O. Box 1144
Gold Beach, OR 97444

SMALL PRESS NOTES

The new WYRD (#7) arrived in a neat booklet, offset format, with an editorial affirmation that WYRD is a place 'where something excellent, but probably a bit odd or unusual, could find its way into print.'

Ahh, yes, but it all depends on the quality of the editor's taste, his judgement, his keen sense of what's good---and what is shit.

I don't think editor Greg Stafford and "The Council of Co-conspirators" have that necessary judgement yet.

Observe the first paragraph from Wayne Hooks' story, "The Whole Truth":

The crowd ebbed and flowed around Kurshed. His broad shoulders projected above the milling mass. The unwashed stench offended his nostrils, overpowering the perfume with which he had anointed his beard that morning. The sun watched the parched market place. Scorning the crowd, Kurshed pushed his way through the mob, ignoring outraged cries as he trod upon naked toes. A timid hand plucked at the flowing sleeves of his robe. His patience exhausted, Kurshed turned and roared, "Be gone, beggar or I shall dirty my hands in your death."

On the good side, this opening is vivid, portends action and violence, describes place, major character, and situation. It does make you want to read on.

Except it is such a klunky, unknowingly BAD piece of prose in other ways:

It takes time for a whole crowd to ebb and flow. Has Kurshed been standing there for a long time?

Broad shoulders projecting above the crowd is awkward and malaprop; he has no head?

Would a washed stench be better? Avoid 'with which' at all costs! People are outraged, not cries. Cries of outrage, please.

Oh, yes, that sun watching the parched market place. Too much metaphor; don't make objects sentient.

The rest of WYRD #7 is heavy in heroic poetry and comic art. The other fiction is bad in other ways.

They want \$2.50 for this publication. Address: The Chaosium, POB 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

I'm NOT feeling vicious today, I assure you. But THE DIVERSIFIER (Sept. and Nov. 1977) is another

case of an editor (Chet Clingan) not knowing yet what is really good, and what should not be published---in fiction and in artwork.

Also, he should be more sensitive to such things as the typeface of his typewriter, layouts, graphics.

He has ambitions of making THE DIVERSIFIER into a much larger circulation magazine---on a par, I suspect, with SFR, LOCUS, and ALGOL. But to make that status stick he must make the magazine appear more professional, and learning the lessons takes time---and usually costs a lot of money.

For instance, the text typeface he uses is standard pica. It looks amateurish in the reduced, two-column format he is using. [I think part of the success of THE ALIEN CRITIC and SFR is due to the Congressional Elite of the Olympia 17-per inch type I used to use, and to the choice of Delegate and Adjutant for text when I got the Selectric.] Standard Pica can be used successfully and to great advantage in semi-pro publishing, but the format must be scaled and chosen to fit the printed-appearance dynamics of that typeface.

Do I see puzzled frowns and hear "What difference does it make?"

It makes a LOT of difference, and knowing the difference is sometimes crucial.

These issues of THE DIVERSIFIER are so-so [not much good] amateur fiction, art and reviews. Better contents are promised with new associate editors for departments in the 1978 issues.

Chet asks \$1.25 for a copy, and his address: POB 1836, Oroville, CA 95965.

LETTER FROM CHET CLINGAN

Undated [February]

'THE FANTASY MASTERS' is coming along, but can't seem to find a publisher. Do you have any suggestions? I have original fiction by MANLY WADE WELLMAN, H. WARNER MUNN, EMIL PETAJA, CARL JACOBI, FRANK BELKNAP LONG, DAVID DRAKE, MARY ELIZABETH COUNSELMAN, JOSEPH PAYNE BRENNAN, and RAMSEY CAMPBELL. Reprints by ROBERT BLOCH, JOHN JAKES, FRITZ LEIBER, MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY,

AND THAT GOES FOR YOUR DAMNED FANZINE, TOO!



KARL EDWARD WAGNER, ANDREW OFFUTT, GREG BENFORD, and E. HOFFMAN PRICE. I think it will be a good anthology, but my lack of reputation is making it hard to obtain a publisher. Would appreciate any suggestions you might have. Also just received a reprint from Ted Tubb.'

((The obvious advice is to submit the idea and list of contents to the likeliest hardcover publishers first, and then, if necessary, work your way down to the quality small press publishers. If you have four thousand dollars yourself it might pay to publish it yourself. After that maybe a Big Name publisher would pick it up. Or maybe, having read your letter here, a publisher will contact you. Good luck with it.))

Numbers 3 and 4 of WINDHAVEN---A Matriarchal Fanzine have been published. Jessica Amanda Salmonson is apparently the editor-in-chief in practice, though Jody Scott, Sherri L. File, and Phyllis Ann Karr are listed, too.

There is a goal listed on the cover of both issues: 'Toward a Feminist and Humanitarian Fantasy and Science Fiction.'

Good enough, but how does 'Humanitarian' square with 'Matriarchal'? Unless it is meant the fanzine is matriarchal, but that doesn't mean the editors are envisioning and advocating a matriarchal society at large.

Being of the patriarch persuasion I find this disturbing.

There are some interesting articles in these issues, for instance "Why Blacks Don't Read Science Fiction" by Charles R. Saunders (#3), and "Obi-Wan, Meet Jubal---" by Jeanne Gomal (#4).

Good, strong editorials and a good letter section in both issues.

Single copy price, \$1.95. By subscription 6 for \$6. Published by Atalanta Press, Box 5688, Univ. Stn., Seattle, WA 98105.

RIP OFF PRESS has sent a comic book full of "Cover-Up Lowdown" panels and two strips of satire of the conspiracy kind. Not bad. I personally think this latest mocking of conspiracy and paranoids is proof of the control of even the counter-culture media by the Insiders! What bothers me is that I'm not offered a large sum of money, or assured success if I'll follow the "party line" of the Huge Money Establishment. This tells me They know I am incorruptible and therefore the only way to silence me is by marking me for death! But I'll fox them! I'll kill myself before I'll let them murder me! But first I have to write 56 issues of SFR suicide note.

Rip Off also sent a review copy of ZIPPY STORIES which features a moron named Pinhead. Eh!

Also, a copy of GREAT DIGGS--The Year of 1977 in Cartoons. By R. Diggs. He is a Liberal, do-gooder, ecologically-oriented knee-jerk type and draws good.

COVER-UP LOWDOWN costs \$1.05
ZIPPY STORIES costs \$1.25
GREAT DIGGS cost \$1.30
all from Rip Off Press, POB 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114.

BLOOD by Hanns Heinz Ewers, is three short stories of a gory mein. Written apparently early in this century, these tales rub our noses in the red underside of mankind's nature. The rubbing isn't too terrible, by today's standards of frankness and realism, but it is easy to see why these stories were banned early on.

Briefly, one story is about voodoo, one about a cock fight in which men take the places of the cocks, and the third...a very short item--a mood piece---in which a fair white virgin does something horrible to a pigeon before a high-priced audience.

Well-written and disturbing, because Ewers makes you think about the very thin veneer of civilization that protects us from...ourselves.

\$5. from: Valcour and Kruegar
POB 2429
San Diego, CA 92101

Bob Frazier, editor and publisher of SPECULATIVE POETRY REVIEW, sent along a copy of #2 and enclosed a small note:

'Your scathing review of SPreview#1 was instrumental in bettering the quality, I hope, here for #2.'

Glad my comments helped. #2 is vastly improved. Now in the 8-1/2 x 11 format, with good lay-

outs, good artwork, and some good poetry. Cost: \$1.50.

I liked the long Lafferty items, the Brunner, the Salmonson and the Dorman.

Further improvements would be a contents page and page numbers. Also, the reviews and editorial matter should be in at least two column format, because following a line of type all the way across a wide page is more work than the average eye likes to do.

SPECULATIVE POETRY REVIEW
30 Pleasant St.
Nantucket Island, MA 02554

There is now an August Derleth Society, and it has issued a Newsletter. Membership fee of \$1. also covers cost of the Newsletter for one year. Send to Richard H. Fawcett, 61 Teecommas Dr., Uncasville, CT 06382.

The fantasy-macabre fan magazines are usually more expensive and more lavish and better printed than sf-fan magazines. WHISPERS, PHANTASY DIGEST, FANTASY CROSSROADS, WEIRD BOOK, and NYCTALOPS, for instance. PHANTASY DIGEST has approximately the same "look" to it inside, with a mixture of good fiction and articles. Especially the Newsnotes section. PHANTASY DIGEST #3 is \$4, in the booklet format, 68 pages.

Probably the most professional item in this issue is "The Blade of Serazene" by Andrew J. Offutt, which nevertheless reads like a subtle parody of the Sword & Sorcery style. From: Box 326, Aberdeen, MD 21001.

FANTASY CROSSROADS #12, from Stygian Isle Press, Box 12428, Shawnee Mission, KS 66212. \$3.50 single copy, U.S.A. (\$4. overseas.) Edited by Jonathan Bacon. 48 pages, letter-size.

Sword & Sorcery oriented, with some good, some indifferent artwork. Also true of articles and fiction.

The major drawback in my view is the seven-inch wide columns of reduced type. 18-22 word-wide columns are deadly to track, and discourage reading. Two columns ten words wide are better, and give an impression of quality text. [Three columned pages are a sign of a more commercialized approach, the ease of reading given more weight than the "appearance" of literary material.] Zinger!

By the way, Jonathan; the Basley bacover or the Conklin centerspread would have made a far better cover than the amateurish Clifford Bird Conan.

WEIRD BOOK #12 is devoted more to Sword & Sorcery and Heroic fiction, with six pieces of verse scattered here and there. The standout item is L. Sprague de Camp's long story, "The Stone of the Witch-Queen." It has his sure professionalism and a touch of ribaldry and bawdiness that I found delightful.

The other fictions are of lesser quality, but are very publishable; editor W. Paul Ganley maintains a high standard. The Steve Fabian cover is very effective.

WEIRD BOOK is \$3. from P.O. Box 35, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226.

NYCTALOPS #13 is devoted more to the horror/macabre sub-genre of fantasy. \$2. from Silver Scarab Press, 500 Wellesley S.E., Albuquerque NM 87106. Edited by Harry O. Morris, Jr. Basically Lovecraftian, this issue has interesting articles about Lovecraft, Ramsey Campbell, and an interview with Brian Lumley. The artwork is better in NYCTALOPS than in the other magazines reviewed in this section; more moody photos and montages...better drawings.

'TO THE PLAIN MAN OF TODAY, AS TO THE MOST FANATICAL LIBERAL OR SOCIALIST, GOVERNMENT APPEARS PRIMARILY AS A DEVICE FOR COMPENSATING HIS WEAKNESS, A MACHINE FOR PROTECTING HIM IN RIGHTS THAT HE COULD NOT MAKE SECURE WITH HIS OWN ARM. EVEN THE TORY HOLDS THE SAME VIEW OF IT: ITS ESSENTIAL FUNCTION, TO HIM, IS TO SAFEGUARD HIS PROPERTY AGAINST THE LASCIVIOUS DESIRES OF THOSE WHO, IF THEY WERE NOT POLICED, WOULD BE TEMPTED TO GRAB IT. "GOVERNMENT," SAID GEORGE WASHINGTON, "IS NOT REASON, IT IS NOT ELOQUENCE---IT IS FORCE." BAD GOVERNMENT IS THAT WHICH IS WEAK, IRRESOLUTE AND LACKING IN CONSTABULARY ENTERPRISE; WHEN ONE HAS DEFINED IT, ONE HAS ALSO DEFINED A BAD BISHOP, CAVALRY CAPTAIN OR POLICEMAN. GOOD GOVERNMENT IS THAT WHICH DELIVERS THE CITIZEN FROM THE RISK OF BEING DONE OUT OF HIS LIFE AND PROPERTY TOO ARBITRARILY AND VIOLENTLY---ONE THAT RELIEVES HIM SUFFICIENTLY FROM THE BARBARIC BUSINESS OF GUARDING THEM TO ENABLE HIM TO ENGAGE IN GENTLER, MORE DIGNIFIED AND MORE AGREEABLE UNDERTAKINGS, TO HIS OWN CONTENT AND PROFIT, AND THE ADVANTAGE, IT MAY BE, OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS FUNCTION IS PERFORMED ONLY IMPERFECTLY BY ANY OF THE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT NOW VISIBLE IN CHRISTENDOM, AND DR. JOHNSON WAS PERHAPS JUSTIFIED IN DISMISSING THEM ALL AS BUT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SAME FRAUD.

---H.L. Menken

'In MAGIC IN THEORY AND PRACTICE (Dover Edition, 1976, \$4), Crowley defines Magick as "...the Science and Art of causing change to occur in conformity with Will". While it may be legitimately claimed that the Supreme Change of the Magician is an internal or psychological one, yet it is obvious that a Magician must implement his Will as well in the cold, hard world wherein we all must grind our bread.

'Far from being merely the concoctions of idle imagination, the Magick of the Order of the Golden Dawn plunged into areas that modern physics and transpersonal psychology are only beginning to suspect the existence of. Luckily for the curious, the entire history and curriculum of this enigmatic Order is now a matter of public record since the publication of Israel Regardie's mammoth work, AN ACCOUNT OF THE TEACHINGS, RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN (Llewellyn Publications, POB 3383, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55165). For those seriously interested in learning more, the Ordo Templi Orientis publishes a newsletter that will be of interest (POB 2303, Berkeley, California, 94702).

'But to portray the real vital connection between Magick and the "experience of the real world", allow me to quote briefly from the writings of Aleister Crowley (THE LAW IS FOR ALL, Llewellyn, P. 321):

'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.
There is no god but man.
Man has the right to live by his own law.
Man has the right to live in the way that he wills to do.
Man has the right to dress as he wills to do.
Man has the right to dwell where he wills to dwell.
Man has the right to move as he will on the face of the Earth.
Man has the right to eat what he will.
Man has the right to drink what he will.
Man has the right to think as he will.
Man has the right to write as he will.
Man has the right to speak as he will.
Man has the right to mold as he will.
Man has the right to paint as he will.
Man has the right to carve as he will.
Man has the right to work as he will.

Man has the right to rest as he will.
Man has the right to love as he will, when, where and with whom he will.
Man has the right to die when and how he will.
Man has the right to kill those who would thwart these rights.
Love is the law, love under will.'

((I have a little trouble with that 'Man has the right to kill those who would thwart these rights' law. Would 'inhibit' be okay? Or 'prevent'?

((I will be happy to believe in Magick. Please forward for publication the spell, incantation or chant required to insure editorial acceptance of offered material. (But for Chu's sake, send me also for my use the counter-spell, incantation or chant!)))

'Concerned about the boy's future, his father, Lockwood Kipling, wrote the headmaster: "I must confess from what I have seen of Ruddy it is the moral side I dread a breakdown on. I don't think he has the stuff to resist temptation. Journalism seems to be especially invented for such desultory souls."

'Kipling was possessed by "deep melancholy and self-distrust." He was prey to insomnia and sporadic exhaustion and an unshakable sense (which most of us try to forget most of the time) that life is brief, perilous, and very likely without meaning.'

'In Kipling's India there was no need of neurosis to see that what passed for society is precariously perched on the brink of dissolution. To survive, it was clear, one must conduct oneself like the inhabitants of some tiny, threatened hill station in the Punjab. No room for artistic self-preoccupation, or self-indulgence. What mattered was the everlasting effort to make things work, and a useful conspiracy to honor and encourage those who did so. That was Kipling's view of India and of human life. He rarely glossed over the cowardice, chicanery, and sheer bestiality of the world, colonial and otherwise, but he persistently tried to see in certain human enterprises the likeness of a noble aspiration.'

---Timothy Foote
HARPER'S, March, 1978

#LETTER FROM DALE R. GOWIN

March 15, 1978

'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

'I would like to respond briefly if I may, to a review of an Arthur Machen pamphlet by Darrell Schweitzer that appeared in your last issue, (#24, page 49).

'Mr. Schweitzer mentions that Machen was "...a member of the famous Order of the Golden Dawn along with Aleister Crowley and such people...", and in the same paragraph he states that "since magical systems are concocted solely from the imaginations of the magicians, experience of the real world won't do you any good" in understanding Machen's esoteric prose.

'While it is undeniable that there exists a relationship between Magick and imagination, Mr. Schweitzer's statement is inaccurate and misleading as it stands. "Magick", in the sense that the term was used by the Golden Dawn and is used by the Orders that succeeded it, is fundamentally based upon the "experience of the real world". If we define the term "real" such that it includes only the objective, phenomenal world which is composed of material elements and is perceptible to the five senses, then one might say that the "real world" is the laboratory of the Magician.

'Aleister Crowley's encyclopaedic periodical, THE EQUINOX, carried this motto on every title page: "The methods of science; the aims of religion". (THE EQUINOX was where some of the formerly secret teachings and rituals of the Golden Dawn were first openly published). The serious Magician is not interested in faith or unsupported belief; s/he is concerned only with empirically verifiable results obtained from direct experience. "Faith must be slain by certainty, and chastity by ecstasy", writes Crowley in THE BOOK OF THOTH (Weiser, N.Y.). Magick (spelled with a "k" and pronounced with a long "a" to distinguish it from sleight-of-hand trickery and primitive superstition) combines the rigorous skepticism and exactitude of Science with the creative genius of Art and Mysticism resulting in specific formulas that produce definite results. The validity of this statement can be verified by anyone who will take the time and energy to investigate some of the literature which is now widely available for the first time.

2-11-78 Klaus Boschen, an SFR reader in New York, sends on occasion items from newspapers and such that he thinks might interest me. There are several readers who gift me thusly.

Klaus sent along the Jan. 22, 1978 column, "Paperback Talk" by Ray Walters, from the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW.

Ray comments that with the great sales of the pb STAR WARS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (and hardcover editions of THE SILMARILLION, THE HOUSE OF MERLYN and GNOMES) dancing in their heads, 'almost every paperback house is planning to expand its list of sf and fantasy' in 1978. Last year 13% of all book titles published in the U.S.A. fell into the sf-fy category.

Also detailed is the coming of 'graphic novels': 'large format paperbacks that depend upon pictures as much as words to tell their stories.' Both Ballantine and Pocket Books have some of these scheduled beginning in March, and these books will be fantasies 'teeming with strange creatures, heroes and villains, high adventure and eroticism---grown-up descendants of the comic books...' The books are:

THE FIRST KINGDOM by Jack Katz
(Pocket/Wallaby, \$3.95)

NEVERWHERE by Richard Corben
(Ballantine, \$8.95)

These sound like very expensive large-size adult big-little books. With more and more of our young populations functionally illiterate, there may be a future for these hybrids. But since the TV-talk generation (that part of it, I mean) which finds reading a no-win situation maybe doesn't earn enough to afford these \$4 and \$9 books, this experiment may be a loser.

Literate people will be ashamed to be with one of these 'graphic novels'...so except as a curiosity, who will buy them regularly? TV is getting sexier every year, and soon we may see a sex-appeal fantasy series on TV for adults.

Stay tuned.



'Congratulations. Judging from the current issue you've heeded my plea to print more of your own writing and/or opinions in SFR. And to my way of thinking you've thus improved it greatly. Your comments on the Bakke case seem particularly trenchant to me, and your extrapolations appear logical. Now we'll have to wait and see who flashes on them and what kind of feedback you get. I, for one, am disgusted with the whole quota-system approach in our overpopulated society; it's a copout for everyone in authority who wants to avoid coming to grips with any problem on a realistic (i.e., individual) basis. Similarly, it's an excuse for nerds to claim their "rights" (i.e., unearned privileges and freebies) and a handy political weapon. The only valid quota-system is embodied in Sturgeon's Law: following its precept, I recommend we get rid of 90% of everything!

((Right on! It IS understood, isn't it, that you and me do the selecting?))

LETTER FROM C.C. CLINGAN, EDITOR, THE DIVERSIFIER

Early February

'This is a letter for quote, from "one of those editors of a semi-pro magazine who does a slipshod job".'

'I'm sure Mr. Trtek could do a better job if he only had the hundreds of dollars a year (out of his own pocket) to pay for publishing a semi-pro magazine. Or the eight or more hours a day to spend typing, reading manuscripts---and answering everyone with a personal note---laying out, pasting up, writing letters, sending out stories to be illustrated, and the hundred other little things that go with being a "good editor", and publishing a bimonthly (or any frequency for that matter) magazine.

'However, I doubt that he has what it takes, it's easier to write letters to other magazines telling people what they're doing wrong.

'If he had one tenth of the talent that any of the three people he mentioned---Charles Saunders, Darrell Schweitzer or Karl Wagner---he could consider himself lucky. Where does he get off calling these people names. All three have sold to pro magazines, can he make the same statement? I'll lay odds he can't.

'He says he was charitable by describing Charles Saunders as a bozo. I think you were charitable in your remarks to him.

'I've seen people like Mr. Trtek come and go, they shoot their mouth off and profess their great knowledge of everything, and in the end they fade away with no one ever remembering them. Judging by his letter, I'd say he's between sixteen and twenty years old.'

((Ah, yes, by their syntax ye shall know them.))

2-13-78 I am always astonished/applauded/amused at authors who put down fan reviewers for having missed the point of novels. They condemn fan reviewers as incompetent, immature, unread...

I always wonder who the hell these authors are writing for?

Fan reviewers are almost all heavy readers of sf, almost all in the upper percentiles of intelligence.

Whereas the average reader of sf is someone who likes sf but who doesn't make a steady diet of the genre. If a cover or title intrigues them, or if a favorite author has a new book out---they'll buy the paperback, maybe a dozen times a year.... But they don't analyze the novel as they read it. They don't have (usually) a command of English Literature old and new to use as critical tools, or a grounding in Critical Analysis...

Who are these dissatisfied authors writing for?

For English professors?
For the one reader in a thousand or so who is intellectually equipped to perceive underlying themes and subtle interrelationships?

Fan-fucking-tastic!

I would like to say to these writers: Hey, if an intelligent, heavy reader of sf doesn't get your message, or understand your lithe literary effects, you're not making yourself clear enough. And you're likely playing a pretentious game of Misunderstood Artist.

In which case, bub (or bubess), the fault lies in you, not in your readers.

Of course it is possible to write on more than one level---action/adventure for the less sophisticated, and subtle effects and messages for Those Who Can Dig It.

But---ah---almost always the complaining author has short-sheeted the first, larger audience (sometimes contemptuously) in order to make brownie points with the second, infinitely smaller readership.

What these authors don't ever seem to realize is that if they manage to tell a super-wowser of a sto-

ry on the first level, the intellectual audience will, all by themselves, discover/see/find/create all kinds of themes and symbols and arcane literary meanings in that story--which the author was never aware of when he wrote it!

Happens all the time.

Professorial careers are now being built on deep analysis of the works of Heinlein, Dick, Farmer, Ellison, Vonnegut, Bradbury....

Writers can damage themselves seriously if they become self-conscious while writing, either when they're starting out, or in mid-career.

Of course, it's a seductive, ego-trippy disease, and there may be no known cure short of lobotomy, which is worse than the disease. (Well...there are some writers...)

End of impassioned editorial. Let's get to some of the letters which have come pouring in.

LETTER FROM DR. DEAN R. LAMBE

9 February 1978

'Let me add my vote for more Geis, less whatever, in SFR for the simple reason of "better a known devil"---the paranoia of others in SFR is not nearly as understandable.

((This issue should satisfy you. If you want even MORE of me---how delicious!---I could simply make SFR a one-man personalzine...but, no, even I would think 80 pages of Geis a bit much. Still---my ego is up to it, even if my energy-level isn't.))

'Ian Covell's interview with Bob Shaw was masterful. It doesn't take a psychologist to see that "eyesight and light" are indeed vital issues for Shaw. Shaw is quite correct in his assumption that most of humanity would rather be deaf than blind--ign that question to any deaf person you know. Shaw seems to equally protest too much on the subject of bitchy women.

((Ian feels dissatisfied with the interview, even though yours is a typical judgement. He has an interview with Moorcock, and one with Brunner, coming up in future issues.))

'Re: Your comments on the dull nipples on the cover of #23; what are the librarians to think of the Fabian cover on #24? Apparently it's OK blast off a guy's butt and balls right out there for all the world to see, but it's a no-no to have a gal stick it to us?

((I suggested the cover idea to Steve (though not which area to blast) to underline the absurdity

of the sex-no-no on covers as opposed to the OK of violence. Violent, graphic death is acceptable on a magazine cover. Loving, graphic sex is not. AND THAT'S THE WAY IT IS! In America. At the present time.))

'Re: your earlier efforts to grow veggies under artificial sunlight in your basement---I have just discovered that the unplanted tulip bulbs in the bottom of my refrigerator have begun to sprout....is this, after all these years, the final critical proof that the light doesn't go off when you shut the refrigerator door? Let's hear from the "special creationists" on that.'

((Ghod works in mysterious ways.))



LETTER FROM ROY TACKETT

'I really cannot let the missive from Duane T. Gish pass by without some sort of comment. By Zeus, no. "Neither creation nor evolution are scientific theories," he says. Oh, I don't know...using Gish's own criterion that there must be repeatable observation I would say that there has been considerable repeated observation to back up evolution. I think the fossil records around the world speak quite well for themselves when it comes to repeatability.

'I realize, of course, that there is no winning arguments with creationists. Even if they admit there is a fossil record they will tell you that it was created by god simply to test mortal man.

'There are, says Gish, no transitional forms between a theoretical ape-like ancestor for man and man himself (or herself as the case may be). Indeed? Ramapithecus, an ape-like creature, ranged Africa, Asia and Europe as long ago as ten million years. His fossil remains have been found in various places and dated at various times. His jaw and tooth structure make him our earliest known ancestor and I should point out that studies made during the past year show that the cellular makeup of ol' Rama's teeth is identical to our own. Homo habilis (round him off to three million years ago, give or take a couple of fortnights) is transitional between Rama and Homo Erectus. (I said Erectus, Dick, not Erection.)

((I dunno, Homo Erectus sounds vaguely obscene to me...and unnatural. Does Anita Bryant know about him?))

'Erectus is transitional between Habilis and Neanderthals and that one is transitional between Erectus and ourselves. Some of the fossil skulls from Palestine (Ah--Mr. Gish, think of that.) are definitely transitional between Neanderthal and modern man. So much for the argument that there are no transitional forms. Read Leakey's ORIGINS, my dear sir.

'As for birds, I lean heavily towards the idea that the dinosaurs were hot-blooded and that the birds today are the remnants of the dinosaur population.

((Sic transit gloria mundi, Tuesday, and always.... Someday we, too, will be altered remnants.))

'As for creation...I might give it more serious consideration if you show me which creation story deserves more consideration than the rest. Shall we discount the Navajo story of creation in favor of others? What about the Greek story of creation? The Sumerian? Ah, I know that you will say the Christian (more properly Judeo-Christian) story is the one but, as I am sure you are aware, there are even two of those in Genesis.'

((I have my own Creation story: 'In the beginning Ghod created a cosmic erection. He looked down at it and found it Good. Then He created a cosmic vagina and womb. He found them Good, too. Then He fucked that cosmic pussy and got it Pregnant. After nine billion years it gave birth to the universe---a great, concentrated ball of unstable matter. It exploded, of course, and galaxies went every which way. God, pissed off, said to hell with it and left. He has never been seen

again. The cosmic vagina and womb tried to do right with the universe, but it got to be too much to handle, growing as it was, so the mother of the universe followed Ghod, also never to be seen nor heard of again. Our universe is an unfortunate accident.))

LETTER FROM ED MESKYS

RFD 1, Box 63
Center Harbor, NH
03226

6 Feb 1978

'I just finished reading the Nov. SFR which I found very interesting. John Boardman taped it for my personal use, which I appreciated very much. I am now engaged in a project to eventually produce several fanzines, or at least excerpts therefrom (too early to tell) on cassette for general circulation among blind SF readers. Would you have any objection to SFR being so distributed? Proper acknowledgement and credit would be given.'

((I have no objection, and I am sure none of the contributors to SFR have any objection.

((The new form sent by the Library of Congress for copyrighting material (For a Nondramatic Literary Work--form TX) has a release section in it (#8) which allows the copyright holder to give permission to the Library of Congress to make braille and special recordings of the work for the exclusive use of the blind and physically handicapped. I okayed this section when I copyrighted SFR #84, and will okay it with each issue when I fill out the form. I urge other fanzine publishers to do the same.

((Of course, the release doesn't mean the Library of Congress will pick SFR to render in braille or record.))

'I am working on this project with the librarian for the blind in New Hampshire and it will probably take another seven months to a year for the project to get off the ground.

'I found all 4 interviews very interesting. Of course some were reprinted which gave you less control, but still I wish the Bradbury interviewer had asked him about the myth of his being anti-technology. I met Bradbury at a Westerncon 13 or 14 years ago and at that time he said he was not against technology but only its misuse. In fact, he waxed rhapsodic about some of the gadgets at Disneyland.

'I was amazed at Vance's complete self awareness of every word he uses. To still be thinking about the one split infinitive he ever used is amazing.

'I especially enjoyed the Piers Anthony interview. A lot of his fiction and interaction makes much more sense now. I met him twice... when he visited me on his way to Milford a dozen years ago, and when I attended his seminar at Goddard College a year and a half ago. I have enjoyed his company and conversation very much, and his daughter Penny is delightful.

'I have revived Niekas after a hiatus of 8 years and published #21 last February. We sent you a copy but have no idea if it ever reached you. Many of the copies sent out seem to have been eaten by the p.o., as we have gotten many complaints from people who failed to get their copies. It is now just about Out of Print and we are keeping the few remaining copies for sale at a special price. #22 will be out in a few months and we will send you that. NIEKAS is not what it once was, but I hope it can grow back to its former stature some day.

'While I cannot read them directly I keep a file of ink print copies of fanzines for reference and for sharing with coeditors and friends. When N22 does come out I hope you will consider placing me on your mailing list in exchange for it.'

((Alas, I didn't receive NIEKAS #21. I look forward to #22, and expect the zine to once again be a Hugo winner. It used to be THE zine to get. You are now on the Complimentary list.))

LETTER FROM AVEDON CAROL

4 February 1978

'I guess Ed Przasnyski wants to know if I spent eight years killing rats so I could prove I'm qualified to save lives. I don't want to play this crummy elitist game, but I'm a gynecologic counselor and I'm pretty well-respected in my field. Even if I wasn't, that wouldn't invalidate anything I wrote (which was obviously not the same thing he read, anyway).

'What I really don't understand is (a) why does he say I make generalizations and that I wrote a long letter as if they were Obscene Things To Do? (b) where does he get the idea that I think doctors are supposed to be superhuman (when I'd merely be grateful if they would admit they are human?) (c) you mean you've never heard of Eyesenek? (d) what does Harlan Ellison have to do with it? (e) what does he need a canary for when he puts out so much shit himself?'

((For those readers who came in late, see Avedon's Letter in SFR 23, and Ed's in SFR 24.))

'By the way, here's some junk I pulled out of some recent NIH Cancer Inst. reports that might amuse you: People who don't eat meat are far less prone to heart disease and cancer than people who do eat meat (so it won't be that much of a surprise if your expectations of someday seeing "a report showing that the life expectancy of heart patients is better if they are treated with heavy doses of certain vitamins and live on a strict diet designed by a dedicated nutritionist" are met). And people who smoke between one and ten cigarettes a day, or people who have smoked cigarettes but quit are less likely to get lung cancer than people who have never smoked at all. I swear I don't make this stuff up.'

((How about the underground knowledge that taking lecithin, lots of vitamin C, about 1200 units of vitamin E, a good multivitamin, and a B-complex supplement and a mineral supplement, every day (taking the E and C in three parts during the day-night) will protect you from the consequences of smoking and eating too much sugars and starches... up to a point. Smoking three packs a day for twenty years is simple suicide, as well as eating to the point of fifty to 100 pounds overweight.

((And of course, there's no arguing with that greedy, impatient infant in a lot of people who never learned or was never taught discipline, by parents, in the crucial early years.

((And the submerged infants-in-adults go on to have and raise more undisciplined people....))

LETTER FROM ALEXIS GILLILAND

February 7, 1978

'Currently I am working on the final version of a fanish theatrical venture to put on at Disclave, ((May 26-29)) a sort of prequel to STAR WARS, it is called STAR WARS' ROOTS. A non-musical (due to WSFA's present lack of singing talent) it should run just about an hour, with Avedon Carol starring as Darth Vader. ((Perfect casting?))

'On Duane T. Gish's letter, I offer the following:

(1) Radical evolutionary changes take place in small populations under severe environmental stress.

(2) The fossil record is a random sampling of species. The species most likely to be represented are the most numerous; i.e., the stable, evolved species.

(3) The gaps are statistically exactly what you would expect.

(4) The DNA codons are the cards in God's deck. Evolution is God playing solitaire, and Creation... when it happens is God cheating at solitaire.

(But--if you can't trust God, who can you trust??)

LETTER FROM HARRY ANDRUSCHAK

6 Feb. 1978

'On page 75 of SFR #24, in your footnote to the Harlan Statement, you ask what next. Well, having been born in England, I would guess the next hot topic is The Irish Question at SEACON.

'We have been told, by the Irish, that all those English (when not putting out interesting fanzines) steal Irish land, keep them in slavery, want to introduce birth control and abortion into a happy, God-loving Catholic country, and all that. Wanna make a small bet on it?'

(I'm not sure what you expect to happen--the Guest of Honor becoming a propaganda machine for one side or the other? An invasion of violent, loud Irish fans, or just riotous Irish intent on disrupting the Con? A bomb scare??)

2-16-78 The WALL STREET JOURNAL today reports that alternatives to the postal service are beginning to look very attractive now to companies that distribute phonograph records, as well as to book publishers. If proposed postal rate increases take effect in July of 1979, mail costs will have increased 400% since 1971.

The alternative methods of distribution used so far are local newspaper deliverers, and local distributing companies created to fill the demand by large bulk mailers.

How can these locals make money where the p.o. loses? Ahh, the locals employ people at about \$5,000 per year, while the p.o. is forced to pay \$17,000+ per employee.

The Market eventually triumphs. But the p.o. is predictably going to fight like hell to retain its monopoly--with the fervent support of the mail unions.

(Word is that the postal service is now more interested in electronic mail transmission, and will perhaps lease the service/equipment from a major electronics company.)

LETTER FROM ROBERT OLSEN

Early Feb., 1978

'Let me be the first to point out that you printed the same letter from Alexis Gilliland twice in issue 24. I can only assume that one of the replies is from you and the other from Alter; my vote is for you being the one who feels faintly ridiculous, since this would be impossible for Alter.'

((Yes, you were the first of a bout a dozen, so far. One small goof for Geis is one large "Aha!" for fandom. *Grump*))



2-18-78 I am perhaps misreading what may be a temporary situation, but of the last 11 Ace releases, all are reprinted sf (plus ALIEN MEETINGS, a Brad Steiger collection of reported meetings with alien beings---non-fiction, for our purposes).

Today I received six reprints of early Ace novels by Poul Anderson (some from Ace Doubles, I imagine). [I include the six in the total of eleven.]

I do not in the least begrudge Poul the extra money these reprints represent. But I wonder if the science fiction establishment's response to the success of STAR WARS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS is to be a flood of space-opera reprints of early work by now-well-known sf writers?

And I voice again the speculation that there may be very little need for new novels in years ahead, considering the thousands of titles available to choose from--with the exception, of course, of new blockbusters from the current Biggies and the current Great New Talents.

There may well be a strong economic force at work, too: the Poul

Anderson reprints are new to anyone under 25 or so, and probably the reprint rights were acquired [or used, if purchased way back in the 50's as part of the original contract] for less than the going rate for a new novel by a new or little-known writer. Plus, the Anderson books will likely sell far better than a book by a new writer.

As times get tougher the money factor will become more important.

Wither sf? Nowhere. Sf will possibly end up living off its past, like a snake swallowing its tail.

LETTER FROM RON MONTANA

Feb. 3rd, 1978

'You mention the possible demise of Manor Books in SFR24. They are alive and well and living at 432 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. I bring it up because God knows we need all the publishers we can get. I signed a contract with them for my first sf novel, SIGN OF THE THUNDERBIRD, in August '77 and received the advance copies on Jan 5th, 1978, which I thought was pretty fast work. The advance is \$1500, at least for SF by an unknown. If you last sold them in say, '65....'

((Ron, you misread that note re MAJOR BOOKS. I print your letter in case others did, too. And to let your sale be known to fandom. Congratulations. Obviously some new novels by unknowns are being bought and published.))

MORE FROM PETER WESTON

2 February, 1978

'I note your comments on "One Immortal Man" and hasten to assure you there's no need for you to sponsor your own publications of the sequel(s). You'll remember my repeated offers to take further chunks of what will eventually be a novel, and in view of my hard work to date I certainly hope you'll give ANDROMEDA first refusal.'

((As you'll see in this issue, Peter, rather than continue the story from where it left off in the novelet published in ANDROMEDA 2, I decided to continue it from an interior point...and I don't see how that could be used in ANDROMEDA, or accepted by the readers of the first version. But I'll send you advance copies of the SFR serial, and who knows?))

'Speaking of which, I've already denied the rumour you printed, apparently started by George Hay. Now,

he knows nothing about the ANDROMEDA series, but isn't it a coincidence that he should start the rumour at a time when his own PULSAR series is about to appear? (Containing at least one of my rejects, says I nastily).

'My third book has in fact gone in, Futura are pleased and very keen to make up lost time with the series. Contents for #3:

"Black Glass" (12,000 w.) by Fritz Leiber;
"A Time Span to Conjure With" by Ian Watson;
"Silver Paw" by William Wu;
"Connections" by David Langford;
"The Cremation" by Christopher Priest;
"Brother Ape" by David Redd;
"Wanderers & Travellers We Were" by Darrell Schweitzer;
"Flare Time" by Larry Niven (16,000 w.)
"Not Absolute" by Tom Allen (Shippey).

'The book is due out in September and we have high hopes once again of a US edition for the three to date, which would please you, wouldn't it?

((Very much.))

'Please mention that I'm already reading for #4 and submissions are invited; we can now pay 3¢ per word, plus extra payments for overseas editions.

'Very much enjoyed the John Varley interview in SFR #22.'

LETTER FROM LYNNE HOLDOM

Feb. 6, 1978

'Just thought I'd drop a loc to let you know I'm alive and well. I should be stencilling up my zine but that's another matter. We're having our second blizzard of the winter at the moment so I am sufficiently isolated at the moment. I thought I could begin to get caught up in my correspondence (hah!) and let you know why I've been incommunicado for so long.

'First, I am reading GALAXY's slush. My way of doing this is as follows: I first go through go through the whole pile to weed out the real stinkers--about 60-65%. Then I go back and read all those that read somewhat well the first time. Since they are not being compared to stories in which two Angels at an Angel Academy named Lenny and Marvin are sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah or one in which the rock star, pinball wizard of the spaceways is flitting hither and yon, I can weed out 60% of the remainder and then send the rest on to JJ Pierce. This is usually about ten

manuscripts. Occasionally, very occasionally, I'll send a long note telling the writer what he/she could do to improve the story since it does have possibilities if the writer knew a bit more about writing--tightening, foreshadowing, cutting of extraneous scene etc. And to think I didn't go to grad school in English because I didn't like this sort of thing. That may be two or three people in a slush pile that originally held 100-125 manuscripts. I do try to write something to just about everybody unless the story is so bad that it defies description or makes me nauseated when I think about it---again four or five a mailing.



'The most common faults are much to much lengthy an intro (four pages in an eight page story), or use of an old, old idea. I've made up a list of plots to avoid as well. Sure LeGuin or Harrison could probably use them and do it well, but they would know what clichés to avoid. Then there are the stories meant to be shocking which aren't. I got a story in which the whole idea was integrating men's and women's rooms. I just wrote that this was fact in Japan now. I met Darrell Schweitzer at PhilCon and we exchanged some slush pile horror stories--he reads for LASPM. Usually stories by fans make it past the first weed-out as fans generally have a wider reading knowledge of SF and don't get ideas from THE SLIME MONSTER or STAR TREK reruns. When someone in a story describes a character as having pointed ears like Mr. Spock, I groan.'

((Let me take this opportunity to say that because I may publish my own sf in SFR, that does not mean I am interested in publishing

anyone else's sf in SFR. (Unless you are a top sf professional with a story eating your heart out that no existing professional outlet will touch because of its outrageous elements). I DO NOT WANT TO READ A SLUSH PILE OF AMATEUR, SEMI-PRO, OR LOW-GRADE PRO SF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)

'LeGuin and Dick's experiences with the Polish Publishing Company ((Real name Wydawnictwo Literackie --didn't trust your fingers to spell it right?)) should make anyone hesitate to have works published in Communist lands, at least if they want to be paid or not have their work butchered. (Er, that should be his/her work published.) (I prefer him/she as correct usage. I would advise avoiding the offensive penis/puss terminology as too avant-garde.) John Brunner had a run in with an East German publishing company because they wanted to make some 'small changes' to purge capitalist decadence from his work or something like that. By any name it is still censorship.

'As a bookstore clerk, I would say that a writer does better (in pb at least) to label his/her writing SF than mainstream as SF sells better unless you happen to be Harold Robbins. A lot of mainstream writing (what gets put there anyway) is really Gothics, either of the sappy, romantic type or of the demonic possession type. There are also quite a number of books taken from TV series like HAPPY DAYS or WELCOME BACK KOTTER. To get in with the classics you probably have to be dead or JD Salinger. Yet I wonder what SF will become if taken over by fly-by-night publishers hoping to cash in on the STAR WARS craze.'

((There will be a few opportunistic schlock publishers enter the Market to rip-off the supposed STAR WARS millions-of-potential readers, but two fans visited me recently who are into movie-TV and comics SF, and who don't read hardly any printed SF at all. They have enough in those media to fill their SF hunger. And I think that's 95% true of the STAR WARS--CLOSE ENCOUNTERS audiences. They are not readers. There will be some triggering to seek out SF books and magazines, but not very much!))

'At the moment they have STAR TREK picture books (for the illiterates the schools are graduating?) and I saw a religious STAR WARS book which purports to get the message of the Gospel from the film. How could I have missed that? We agnostics are a strange breed. Can we possibly miss what's so plain?'

((God's purposes are not ours to know.))

ALIAN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

THE ALTER-EGO VIEWPOINT



"Okay, Geis, drop your cock and grab your socks. We've got reviewing to do."

Watch your language, Alter. This is a family fanzine.

"But the family is adult, so don't give me any of that reflex puritanism that lurks beneath the surface of your lobe."

Half a lobe is better than none, I guess. What reviewing?

"You know! THE TWO OF THEM, the new novel by Joanna Russ."

Oh, yeh. Interesting, thought-provoking, a total failure as a novel, but a good vehicle for Russ' continuing hate-on for male-dominated societies.

"Predictable response, Geis. Is that all you can say for it?"

I was trying to capsule it for you. You want more detailed comment I can give you this: It is a novel of unanswered questions. Irene and Ernst are Earth-present people recruited and trained by 'the gang' who can transport them to alternate Earths or planets... Nothing is certain! These two were trained and are on a spy mission to a moslem culture that has fashioned a home for itself underground in a planet or moon with an inhospitable sun.

But Irene--with seething hatred in her--a feminist in spades--is so pissed off at the woman-warping, dehumanizing, suffocating moslem-ideal society that she disrupts the mission by insisting of taking a young girl away from her family because her family will probably either squash the girl's talent and spirit or drive her insane.

Irene identifies intensely with the girl. This causes heavy conflicts in Irene--she remembers her own 1940-ish upbringing in Earth-present society--and she ends up apparently shooting Ernst because he might be planning to help the Gang revamp her personality or worse. She escapes with the girl and with a little footloose boy who was on the spaceliner during their trip back to base....

"Geis, Russ is deliberately vague about the Gang and such. The center of the book must be on Irene and her torment in a still-sexist organization, in a sexist world, in a sexist universe! Sexism is the core!"

I understand that. I see what's going down when Irene and Ernst fight hand-to-hand in near-weightlessness as she and the girl and boy near the time of their escape. Tiring of the match, fearing losing, she simply pulls a gun and shoots him. We never know if he died or not. And they were lovers...virtually mated. Ernst is throughout the book 99% a perfect male---thoughtful, considerate, loving... But in the end he is a HATED MAN and get shot.

"That bugs you, eh, Geis? But Russ is only getting even a bit for decades---generations---of stories in which the woman gets shot or sacrificed...or self-sacrifices for the man."

I'll betcha men kill more men in sf novels than they kill women. But... See? This book forces one to think about what Russ is saying, and Russ in effect is giving fictional form to Feminist Dogma. The problem is the novel suffers for being used as a platform for these views, so blatantly.

"You're saying that as a novel the book is a cheater?"

Yes. And as a tract it's confused. As a thought-provoking irritant it succeeds.

"You don't think Joanna Russ is really as intensely angry and frustrated as her Irene character, do you?"

No. She'd commit murder or commit suicide if she were. She feels strongly. SIMILARLY, I hope readers will not think me a totally amoral sexist, a killer, from a reading of the first third of ONE IMMORTAL MAN in this issue of SFR. I (and Joanna) live in the real world; we write in fantasy worlds, and we can let our ids go as far as we want in fantasy. That's what fiction is for---for writers and readers. I believe readers have a right to coherent, rational fantasies, with as few loose ends as possible.

She thinks my fantasies are Wrong...and I think hers Warped. We're both right, I suspect.

"Geis, Geis, Geis...if you suspect your Male Chauvinist Pig Sex-

ist fantasies are wrong, why do you perpetuate them? Why do you indulge them?"

Because, Alter, I am deeply what I am on the emotional level that fuels my fiction-writing urges. I wouldn't write fiction at all if I had to write "nice" "fair" "approved" fiction. There's a strong stubborn, non-conformist, take-it-or-leave-it streak in me. And as for being such a hairy chauvinist and sexist---I'm not so sure I really am, and I'm not so sure instinctual forces aren't responsible for the male-dominated cultures and societies civilization has brought forth, and I am pretty sure that science and technology and the wealth they have permitted are responsible for Wimlib; as a surplus-enjoying civilization, we can afford/endure the changes in family/etc which science and technology require. That's the Yin/Yang of it. When the basic underlying economic facts of life for the mass-production society change--so will the culture and family and interpersonal relationships.

We live in interesting, turbulent times fueled by the gargantuan exploitation of natural resources made possible by science and technology. When the basics change, the superstructure changes to conform.

"I asked you for a review, Geis, not a damned rehash of your long-view."

Okay. My position is that Russ writes well but she is too Driven to write good novels...as novels. I was raised during the Great Depression and that socio-cultural stew formed me and (with my inborn talents and personal warps and woofs) dictates how and what I write. I will give myself free reign in fiction because I am happiest that way. So, too, in SFR commentary. I am not sorry if the result offends some people. I refuse guilt. At the same time each day I read more, experience more, think more--and change subtly. We all do. My opinions will no doubt change through the years... But, ah, which way?

"Get off the goddamned soapbox! Get back in bed. Grab your cock--"

Mind if I take my socks off first?

"I'm glad you finally finished reading another book, Geis. I was getting bored."

You? Bored? With all the exciting memories of my sown oats and wild times to sort through and enjoy in retrospect?

"Huh! You flatter yourself. All I find are missed opportunities, dumb, clumsy sexual episodes, fear, anguish, dread, half-assed acts of kindness, revenge and love, to say nothing of the weird---"

That'll be enough, Alter. The readers will get the idea I haven't led a glamorous, wicked, unconventional life.

"You were always too shy and timid. Still are...except in print. There is a great deal of Walter Mitty in you."

You want to review this book, or not?

"Sure. It's THE JONAH KIT by Ian Watson, a writer whose reputation preceded him---the author of THE EMBEDDING. I expected a good read and I got one---sort of."

"He has class, Geis. He can write a good scene and can make characters real---rasty-nice and with pimplies who say real things. But he has---in this book, anyway---a lousy opinion of mankind and the ways of the world."

First the Russians manage to imprint the mind of a dying cosmonaut onto the developing brain of a child...and then they learn from that failure by imprinting the mind of a musician onto a young whale, so the whale/man can spy on U.S. deep nuclear subs."

What about Hammond, the astronomer who is world famous and who now reveals to the world that there was a Creator, but He then took a powder on our universe, and....

"And, yeah...it gets distracting for a while, what with four points of view alternating, including the whale/man."

But you like his style, is not his pessimistic ending?

"Yeah. I don't like the idea of anking being a Typhoid Mary species, so abhorrent to another intelligent species that---"

Don't for Christ's sake give away what happens, Alter!

"Oh, yeah, I've got to be more careful about that. But I do have a grunch---what really were those squids in the Deepths with the flashing lights? Is Watson saying THEY are intelligent, too?"

I don't know. I did like Watson's skill in creating a truly different/real alien/whale viewpoint and way of life, including the creation of the Glyphs of stored knowledge and wisdom for the various varieties of intelligent whales.

"Yeah, yeah, the book has its

strong points. But it's a tragedy, and that business of alternate realities...."

Let's let the readers make up their own minds.

"Right-on, Geis. Any copout in a storm."

"Geis! Get your face out of that fanzine and join me over here I need you to carp and set me up while I review."

I'm busy Alter. Go read another book.

"All you're doing is skimming, looking for mentions of your name or SFR."

And finding damn few of either. The faneds are ignoring me! They don't love me anymore!

"You're too good, Geis. SFR is so superior they shrink from recognizing it. Is that what you wanted to hear? Is that what you want them to say in print?"

Well...yes, to be honest, I guess it is.

"You ask and expect too much. Now come over here and assist me."

But you've only got one book there, SEADEMONS by Lawrence Yet, published by Harper & Row at \$8.95. You usually do a slew at one sitting.

"This issue I'm doing the assessments and taxations while the writing is fresh in my mind."

Does this mean you'll be more cruel and thoughtlessly vicious, more impulsive and sarcastic?

"I expect so, since the bad will be so fresh and ugly in my mind."

You know how I hate the sight of blood.

"You say it but look and grin anyway. Now about SEADEMONS---" Lovely wrap-around Frazetta painting for the dust-jacket!

"Yes, but the novel is an example of an author trying to pack too much lost-human-colony names, places and customs information into a thin, low-tension plot. The characters aren't real enough to offset the quiet story or overcome all the strange names and relationships/culture. It all boils down to the slowly declining human colony being taught a nasty lesson in live-and-let-live by the other intelligent species of the planet---those who inhabit the seas."

Okay, now can I go back to my fanzines?

"Yes. See you in a few days."

"All right, Geis, since you know Bill Rotsler to say hello to and chat with, what did you think of his new Doubleday sf novel, ZANDRA (\$6.95)?"

You love putting me on the spot, don't you, Alter?

"Sure do. I think your squirms are a delight to observe. Go ahead, Geis. Squirm for me."

Ha ha. ZANDRA is a highly commercial sf novel of the 'snatched to another world' variety. In this instance a jetload of Americans is 'snatched' by a ruling race from perhaps another, alternate universe. They want the metal and sell the people as slaves. Their ancient machines only focus on what we know and love as the Devil's Triangle near Bermuda.

"I adore the hero's name: Mace Wilde. And the heroine's name is good old Eve Clayton."

Do not mock, Alter. Mace lives up to his name and by guile, intelligence and superior fighting ability (enhanced by the lighter gravity of this metal-poor planet), manages to become the lover to a soon-to-rule Princess and manages to reunite with Eve Claton, who has survived an escape and an alliance with a rebellious race of mountain people.

"Don't forget the kung-fu trained lovely black movie actress, a Liberal Gesture and an Approved Character."

That's sf today, Alter. Don't knock it.

"I wouldn't dream of it, Geis. What I will knock is the italicized interior monologues---the visible thoughts---indulged in, rather awkwardly---by Rotsler. And I didn't like the slow, rather needless preamble first part of the novel where all the major characters are introduced and think and talk as they meet and interact as they board the jet and enjoy the first part of the flight to Doom."

You always like fast starts, I know... But once it gets going, especially in the fight scenes, this novel has elemental power and gripping ability.

"So how come it doesn't end?"

Well, Bill has a sequel in the works. As the novel ends the humans are somewhat in control of their lives and have a chance to get back to Earth---but because of a time differential such a return would plonk them into our future by several hundred years.

"Sounds like a third book, Geis."

Could be....

"Geis, this little small-press book--"

That is not exactly small press, Alter. That is IN MAYAN SPLENDOR, by Frank Belknap Long, published by the revered Arkham House, for \$6. a copy.

"It is a booklet of poetry in hardcovers, Geis, and it is not very good poetry at that, although I will say that Long does evoke vivid mental images every time, and they are evocative images."

Did you note that Steve Fabian has four full-page black and white illustrations in the book, and designed the dust-jacket?

"Yes, I noted! As usual, Fabian is better than the material he is asked to bring to life."

The book is for collectors and devotees, Alter, not---

"It is that. It is also 40 poems long, with the best the last, 'H.P. Lovecraft.' It is 5-1/2 x 7, and finely made, with heavy glossy paper."

Available from Arkham House, Sauk City, WI 53583.

I've never seen you weep before, Alter, when reading a sf novel. I was thunderstruck. Is Edmund Cooper's A FAR SUNSET (Ace 22819-4, \$1.50) that affecting?

"Yes, Geis, it is. I used to

think Cooper was just a hack sf novelist...and maybe he is...but this is a well-written, touching, Tragedy, and so I think now he has the capacity to do really fine work and that every so often every-thing will click and he'll produce a really fine novel. So I'll be at least dipping into his books from now on to see if he's done it again."

His story of Paul Marlowe, the marooned spaceman survivor, on Altair Five, doomed, apparently to spend the rest of his life with a stone-age culture of retrograded humans, is so well crafted and so well written that its superiority isn't readily apparent. But Cooper knows people--inside and out--and is not afraid to let his characters love and die.

"Exactly, Geis. He makes you care and because you care about Paul and his wife and his friends, it hurts when some of them die or are killed."

Alter, what are these two books doing in this basket on my doorstep?

"You must take them in and review them, Geis."

That's your responsibility in this column!

"I'm giving you a little space to review alone. Be grateful. Now you, too, can be pithy and poisonous. Kill, Geis, kill!"

You're just lazy, Alter, but I will review these two foundlings. Just stand clear and keep quiet.

"The stage is yours."

We have here THE WEB OF THE CHOZEN by Jack L. Chalker. The story of a crazy sentient computer who improves the colonists on its space-ship with a very intelligent virus, so that when they land on a habitable planet they turn into immortal donkeys with sonar, radar and a strange new reproductive system.

Enter Bar Holliday, scout for a vast interstellar corporation, and HE is also converted to intelligent donkey status soon after landing on the planet.

Bar doesn't like this altered form and is determined to get back to his ship in orbit... He ends up fighting the computer-directed colony ship still in orbit, the corporation (which wants the donkey species killed off---too much of a threat to the status quo and to mankind as-is, since the virus is exquisitely cat-chable).

But as time goes by Bar finds he prefers the immortal donkey body and in retaliation for a genocidal attack on the donkey planet, he and his few Chosen companions (the Chosen are the new species) go about spreading the virus on all the human-inhabited planets. Success. Mankind is being converted to a better breed.

Except I thought the magic-science of the virus and the Change too much to swallow, and I boggle at the



(I suspect) unconscious morality involved here. Bar Holliday plays God with humanity and without so much as a by-your-leave destroys a vast civilization, an entire culture, disrupts untold billions of lives, undoubtedly drives millions to suicide and death by starvation and panic...

We all know the end justifies the means. And that is the unspoken rule for both sides in this well-written, badly-thought-out science-fiction novel. Read it and weep.

THE WEB OF THE CHOZEN is Ballantine 27376, \$1.75.

The other book, which Alter declines to review for unknowable reasons, is GRAVEN IMAGES (Thomas Nelson, Publishers, \$6.95). Three original novellas of sf by Richard Frede, C.L. Grant, and Barry N. Malzberg.

[They're called novellas, but a strict word-count would I suspect place them all in the novelette category...but 'novella' looks better on the dust jacket, so...]]

This book was edited by Edward L. Ferman and Barry N. Malzberg.

The theme is "Science Fiction and the Arts."

The weakest of these stories is "Oh, Loveless Appearance of the Lass From the North Countree" by Frede. It sucks. A highly skilled painter is hired to paint a skyscape as seen upside-down in a jet fighter at 30,000 feet. There is much to do about going to the airbase, taking training in possible ejection in case of emergency... He finally goes up in the jet as observer--and accidentally ejects. Comes down near a farm house, is taken in by an apparently crazy old woman, held prisoner apparently overnight, and escapes the next (to him) day. Is rescued by an Air Force helicopter and is dismayed to find he has a beard down to HERE and has been missing for years and years.

That whole buildup was to get him into an unexplainable fantasy short-short story---and a hoary one at that. A reader rip-off. The only Alt involved in this one is that of avoiding what is promised.

"A Glow of Candles, A Unicorn's Eye" by C. L. Grant is a good story about two die-hards in a future without live drama performed from a script or play. Helena and Gordon flee to the sticks and preserve the classics and spend their lives heading a traveling band of players, doing drama for the small-towns. The story gets a bit pretentious and literary and poetic in spots, but it is good.

"Choral" by Barry Malzberg is a

slice from the usual Malzberg incredibility roast. The man writes very well, but insists on staging his science fiction in ways that make them very hard to believe. In this instance, a time-traveling actor is assigned to take over or take the place of Beethoven to make sure that recorded history is actually based on a real event. A huge government bureau has thousands of agents in time, making sure historical events happened, because a Very Important theoretical scientist's Theory said the past is fluid...which endangers the present...so the present is obligated to protect itself by policing history.

This Theory makes no sense---and probably is not meant to make sense. Barry does not rationalize very well, and doesn't seem to care.

The protagonist as Beethoven is able to hear and converse easily, even though he is as Beethoven supposed to be stone deaf. And so on. [Does the time traveler inhabit the real Beethoven's body? If not, what happens to the real Beethoven during these Important Events? Or is the time traveler the only Beethoven, ever?]

Barry is, I think, saying that the past is malleable and is only what we know of it. We are not bound by it. We can change it, and be free in ways we don't realize.

I don't agree.

"Okay, Geis, your glory is over. Make room for me. I've just finished reading/viewing a book--"

What do you mean, 'reading/viewing'--

"It's THE ILLUSTRATED ROGER ZELAZNY, Geis! Illustrated in lovely color by Gray Morrow. Edited and adapted by Byron Preiss. Published by Baronet Publishing Co. at \$8.95 a copy, in the heavy gloss stock, letter-size format."

Didn't we once make the point that books such as this---part text and part comic book illustrations---that this hybrid is a curiosity that may attract collectors but is not likely to attract readers because---

"Because the comic book readers will rebel at the price and the text sf readers will be ashamed to be seen with what is essentially a very fancy big-little book."

It offers a really fine rendering of a new Jack of Shadows story ('Shadow Jack') by Morrow. It works beautifully.

"Yes, because the format is all pure-quill graphic story---95% comic book style and 5% text. In the fol-

lowing stories the text content is enlarged and the illos decline to the point of distractions...experiments that don't work. If a story such as "A Rose for Ecclesiastes" is too verbal for a total illustration translation (or if a less than 95% illustration format is attempted) the result is neither fish nor fowl. It doesn't satisfy the visual "reader" or the text reader... though God knows the visuals are glorious and at times marvelous."

It should be noted, Alter, that Morrow used a different technique for each story...different methods.

"Yeah...interesting experiment. I still liked the "Shadow Jack" treatment best. And the Amber Tapestry was impressive as a montage of characters and events and elements."

That's about all there is to say, Alter. Go read another book.

"Damn you, Geis! Don't tell me what to do! Just for that I'm going to read another book!"

"Geis, we don't have room for chit-chat, so shut up for the rest of the column."

My pleasure, Alter.

"I've read THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ARTIST by Sheldon Chols, M.D. and found it full of questionable and unprovable scientific and sociological assertions. For instance, Chols has rather shallow understandings of personality and character, and in addition says 'There is a gene for standard of living.' and 'Talent is enjoying the work you do.' He also is pushing the idea of a guaranteed income for everyone (especially artists) so that they can do their best work unhampered by fears and anxieties about rent and food."

"He thinks artists of whatever stripe have extra sensitivity to Truth, while most others are relatively dull clods."

"This is published by Beau Rivage Press at 7 East 14th St., NY, NY 10003. \$3.50. Booklet format. Offset."

"Of great value to the sf and fantasy writer (or any professional or would-be professional writer) is the new LAW AND THE WRITER, edited by Kirk Polking and Leonard S. Meranus. Interesting, clear, authoritative chapters on "Freelancers and the First Amendment," "The Student Press and the First Amendment," "Guidelines Against Libel," "Invasion of Privacy," plus chapters about book contracts, subsidiary rights,

syndication contracts, the new copyright law (including the complete text of the new law), how to collect from dishonest publishers, pornography, photography law and related matters, taxes, retirement, there is a glossary of legal terms, a bibliography and an index.

"It's a goldmine of information and recommended. It's a quality hardback and costs \$9.95. It is one book you should have.

Available from Writers Digest Books, 9933 Alliance Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242."

"Geis, Geis, where is the ice?"
What?

"Just getting your attention. I've finished reading two books and I've discovered a new genre: speculative fiction."

That's not new, Alter. Speculative fiction is a pretentious name for science fiction.

"No, no...I mean books like THE CRASH OF '79 and THE TANGENT FACTOR. They're might-be, could-be fiction. Contemporary setting but a kind of alternate history."

Well, Alter, I see what you mean, and maybe your use of 'speculative fiction' fits these kinds of books. So what?

"Nothing. Just thought I'd try it on for size and see if it rides too high in the crotch."

Alter, for Christ's sake, review the two books, will you?

"Certainly. THE CRASH OF '79 by Paul E. Erdman (Pocket Books 81249, \$2.50) is as much a chiller involving arab intrigue, oil conspiracy, the threat of atomic warfare in the oil lands, and the duplicity of high-level European governmental policy, plus the obligatory romance involving a beautiful daughter of an atomic scientist-for-hire who is set to work by the Shah of Iran--"

Alter, for the love of--

"Anyway, it's about all that but also and most important it is about the ruthless whealing and dealing of top-level bankers who are in Trouble and desperate to use arab oil money to get breathing room.

"Erdman knows high finance, and his brief lectures on how and why the American banking structure is terribly vulnerable now is no doubt shivering the average reader. Even more so is the picture of macho/money arrogance and power by the oil corporation heads...and perhaps the contempt with which all these big money boys hold the President and his cabinet and lower echelon bureaucrats.

"This book dramatises the power of Big Money---no matter who has it. And the ruthlessness of those amoral

s.o.b.'s who control it."

"The end of the book is High Irony, and results in a 50% reduction in world oil supplies. And triggers a chain reaction of financial disaster which results in a cataclysmic depression, worldwide."

Fun reading, eh, Alter?

"You loved it, Geis, you lousy Doomsayer."

True. I would like to add that the romantic interest was strictly formula-required and dull. The characters are largely who-cares? except for retired banker Bill Hitchcock and some of the spear carriers. The real protagonist is the Saudi billions and the story of how and why they are shifted around is the real power and center of the novel.

"Very good, Geis. Now if you don't mind, I'll say something about awrence Sanders new Putnam novel (\$9.95), THE TANGENT FACTOR."

Don't be sarcastic. I imagine you liked it.

"Yeah. Sanders obviously likes to do different types of books all the time---sf, detective, power/intrigue... And he always makes you think he's been there and is writing from personal experience; there's great detail, fine character touches. Realism.

"This novel is about a small-nation African dictator with charisma who adroitly schemes, conspires and invades neighboring small countries during the beginning of his drive to unite all Africa under a single force---his own. He is helped by a double-agent oil company man, the CIA...."

And you've got to admit, Alter, Saunders can make his women sexy and sensual and distinctively individual. He makes Africa real. He could be faking it all, but his skill and talent are such that Asante is a real country, and dictator Obiri Anokye are utterly convincing.

"The battle scenes are especially well done, combining death, heroism, confusion, planning, cowardice and compulsion, excitement, terror, and rites of passage."

Is there nothing wrong with the novel, Alter?

"No. There is promise that there will be sequels. In fact, I think one of Sanders' earlier books, THE TANGENT OBJECTIVE, was the first of a series about Peter Tangent and Obiri Anokye and the Plan."

Alter, why don't you say something nice about THINGS TO COME--An Illustrated History of the Science Fiction Film?

"Alright, I will. It is by Douglas Menville and R. Reginald. It has an introduction by Ray Bradbury. It has over 200 pages, zillions of stills from sf, fantasy and horror movies, an index and a fair, literate, detailed history and commentary by the authors. I think it a very valuable work. It costs \$8.95 and is in the large quality softcover format. Published by Times Books."

"Geis, I want you to do the honors for this reference book, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, Compiled by Donald H. Tuck, Volume 2: Who's Who, M-Z, in hardcover."

Okay. This volume also has a title index in the back, immensely valuable. There will be updated supplements issued periodically.

There is a third volume due which will deal with magazines, paperbacks, pseudonyms, series, and a general-interest section dealing with publishers, films, fanzines, and etc.

The first two volumes are \$25. each and worth it to the serious collector and the librarian. Order from Advent:Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL 60690.

Alter, I wonder if the current spate of huge genre reference works is Significant in some way?

"Why do you ask? he asked, dreading the answer."

Because we have here in all their majesty, the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OCCULTISM & PARAPSYCHOLOGY in two volumes. Edited by Leslie Shepard, published by Gale Research Company, Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226.

"Thanks to your sloppiness, Geis, we have no material on price, but I'd guess these large size, hard-bound, 500+page well-made books are pretty expensive. But worth it to those who need the incredible wealth of information in them."

Like Magic, Demonology, Superstitions, Spiritualism, Mysticism, Metaphysics, Psychical Science, Parapsychology, with biographical and bibliographical notes and comprehensive indexes.

"An amazing set. These are, however, all without illustrations or photos."

"Okay, Geis, that wraps it up for this issue. Be sure and reserve a few pages for me in #26."

Be sure and read some books, Alter.

"Go do it to a horny yak!"

AN INTERVIEW WITH POUL ANDERSON

TAPED JULY 3, 1977 AT WESTERCON 30,
VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA

SFR: Give us some personal background and how you got into writing science fiction.

ANDERSON: Personal background... that could go back a long way. Well, since I'm always asked how to pronounce my first name and where I got it from. I might as well begin with that.

The family was originally Danish although one branch of it has been in America for about a hundred years. And of course it being Danish the Anderson was spelled with an 'sen'. But my father who was in the U.S. Army in World War I anglicized it for convenience. Then my mother named me after her father who was Danish, thereby pulling me back into the same situation that my father had gotten out of. And I might have anglicized myself except that in grade school they kept telling me I didn't know how to spell my own name, so I got back at them.

SFR: How do you pronounce your first name?

ANDERSON: Well, it's not an anglo-saxon noise. I don't expect anybody on this side of the water to get it right. I'll answer to anything.

As for getting into writing... I had always as far back as I can remember been writing little stories for myself or drawing comic strips, the kind of things a kid does, and eventually I got up the nerve to submit a story to ASTOUNDING (as it was called then) and nobody was more surprised than me when it actually sold. At the time I was in college setting up to be a physicist, and I took the degree, but graduated into a recession where jobs were hard to find and having sold some stories by that time, figured I would support myself by writing while I looked around for a job. And somehow the while came to be longer and longer.

SFR: Whatever happened to the collaborator on your first story?

ANDERSON: You mean F.N. Waldrop. He was a friend of mine from boyhood. We were in college together and we got talking about the genetic possibilities of fallout, so I did all the writing on that first story, but he had contributed enough in the way of ideas that I felt he deserved a byline. He's a very successful physician these days.

SFR: What techniques in terms of inventing a background do you use before writing a story?

ANDERSON: I suppose I should preface any such remarks by saying I've known an awful lot of writers over the years, and I've made kind of a hobby of collecting their working methods and I have never found any two alike. So whatever I have to say applies to me only and not necessarily to anyone else at all. I'm in the class of writers who pretty much want to know everything there is to know about the background and characters, etc. before starting to write. For me the actual typewriter time is only the tail end of a rather long process.

For example, if there's going to be an imaginary planet, I'll start with the type of star, and that already conditions a number of things. Then the planet has a certain orbit around the star. One figures that out. This gives you what irradiation it gets, etc. The axial tilt comes in there also, rate of rotation, and of course you can't be quite arbitrary about the rotation rate, because there are reasons to think it doesn't just happen arbitrarily. Earth and Mars have the rotation period they do which is very nearly the same, not just by accident but because this is how it works. So you figure in elements like that. Of course you have to do a lot of guessing. There's an awful lot we don't know. Eventually you try to get it down to the planet's



Conducted By ELTON T. ELLIOTT

geography, place names, flora, fauna, etc. Plus if its got inhab- itants you've got a whole world to create---being with their own evo- lution and history. So there is a great stack of notes before I'm even ready to start writing.

SFR: Is there more writing involv- ed in background than in the story itself?

ANDERSON: Yes, there's always a great deal of material that does- n't get into the story, like char- acters. If it's a novel I write biographies of all the major char- acters, which range from a few hundred to a few thousand words depending upon how complicated their lives have been up to the point of the story. And most of that never gets into the story, but it helps me to know.

SFR: How do differing moods and emotions affect you when you're writing a story?

ANDERSON: That is almost impos- sible to answer. I don't usually write except when circumstances are right for doing so. Once or twice I had obligations to meet when I wasn't feeling good, and I think that showed. I did the best I could, but nonetheless I don't think it was up to the usual stand- ard, even though it was saleable. But I feel good most of the time anyway. I'm a fairly happy person.

I do, however, get emotionally involved while writing a story. Say you've developed a character, spent a lot of time doing his bio- graphy, and start him off in the story...and very frequently the character takes over.

This is a very common experi- ence for a writer; you'll think you have the whole scene planned, but then the characters come on and they know what they're doing and suddenly it's going quite differ- ently from the way you'd planned, but the right way. They're on the stage, not you, and they know what they're doing. So you've lived with somebody like this for a hun- dred or two hundred typewritten pages, which means a good many days of concentrated work. Then the guy gets killed off, or some- thing awful happens to him... This is going to affect you for sure.

SFR: Do you ever write the ending to a story first?

ANDERSON: No, I don't. But to re- peat what I said earlier: no two writers work the same way. I nor- mally begin at the start, and the

first sentence is always the hard- est to write; it can take, some- times, a day or two to figure it out. Then I continue to the end, knowing pretty much how things are going to go.

SFR: In your recent stories like "The Bitter Bread," "Dialogue," "Joelle," and "Passing the Love of Women" you seem to be attempting to deal with romantic love, more so than in the past. Is there any reason?

ANDERSON: It's a theme. After all, the only things there are to write about are the things human beings can experience, even if you don't have any humans in the story. And I've had stories like that, some outside of science fiction. Even then you're writing through human eyes and putting things into human words. So one tries to deal with different aspects of human experience. I hadn't particularly thought about it---romantic love--- until you mentioned it. In my own case perhaps I figured I had done enough for the time being in some of these other aspects of sf, the purely scientific, etc., and that it was time to move on to some- thing else. I would certainly hate to do the same thing over and over again.

SFR: In Sandra Miesel's essay, "Challenge and Response" in THE MANY WORLDS OF POUL ANDERSON, she identified three basic attitudes in your fiction: 1.) Man Needs A Challenge; 2.) Man Must Respond To Challenge; and 3.) Man Must Accept Responsibility For His Response.

How accurate an assessment of your work do you feel the whole essay is, and in particular the Challenge and Response hypothesis?

ANDERSON: Sandra made some very good points. To tell the truth, I'm not particularly given to thinking about my own work; I just try to do the best I can at the time I'm doing it. I don't have any great messages or anything like that.

SFR: Leave it to the English Professors.

ANDERSON: (Laughs) She certainly put her finger on some of it. Subjectively it seemed to me there were things she didn't discuss, but maybe there wasn't space for it.

SFR: What sort of things?

ANDERSON: Some of the other mo- tifs. You mentioned love, for ex- ample. It seems to me love in its various forms is what human exist- ence is mostly about. So natural- ly I deal with that to some extent at least. Then there are various things one kind of likes to say. However, I don't think there ought to be sermons in stories. That's not what the reader wants. He's paid good money for a story, and he's entitled to a story. But at the same time it's perfectly pos- sible, I think, to say something meaningful as well. And of course I like to see what can be done with the language itself, just for the sake of juggling words around and things like that.

SFR: Do you ever get the urge, at a newsstand, to put your books out in front, when you walk past?

ANDERSON: No, this would be an exercise in futility, I'd think, because supposing I could influ- ence one newsstand, exactly what difference would that make? This is what publishers have sales de- partments for, I hope.

SFR: I know I always get the urge, when I pass a newsstand, to put my favorite authors' books out in front to attract new readers.

ANDERSON: Well, that's very kind of you. We all appreciate it.

SFR: In your future history...at least your main future history... am I correct in thinking you use the spiral theory of history?

ANDERSON: I don't think we under- stand well enough yet how these things work, to lay down a law. In other words, designing a future so- ciety or history is not like design- ing a planet where you at least have some pretty definite laws of physics to go on. Where social matters are concerned we're much more in the dark.

Actually that particular future history was never planned from the beginning; it just sort of grew. I was writing this story and that story and started thinking, "Well, funny, here's a new story, but it could be related to something pre- vious..." So the pattern gradu- ally began to emerge. When I saw there was a pattern emerging, then I began to dive it some conscious thought.

I suppose to some extent these (the future history stories) are cautionary tales. The rise and fall of the Polesotechnic League is to some extent a parable of what has been happening in America.

Yet another people had liberty once and blew it. The Imperial period is of course drawn directly from history, where there are so many parallels. Well, to some extent I suppose the Terran Empire and the Merseians are like the Byzantines versus the Persians, who over the centuries managed to grind each other down until they were mutually worn down to the point where complete aliens could come in and take over on both of them.

SFR: Is there also an analogy to the Americans and the Russians?

ANDERSON: I suppose so---yes---when a society falls apart...when it becomes decadent. Then eventually it becomes a sitting duck.

SFR: Sort of like America today?

ANDERSON: I'm afraid so. People talk about the decadence of the Roman Empire and seem to associate this with sex orgies, etc. from bad Italian movies. When that sort of thing was going on Rome was at the heyday of its power. At the time it collapsed the people were actually quite austere in their private lives. It was not barbarians coming from outside that destroyed Rome---they just came in to pick up the pieces---the Romans destroyed themselves. Or, as a friend of mine once put it, it wasn't so much how the Romans lived, it was that they stopped living for Rome. And I'm afraid that this is very much the case for us. I hear that Mr. Peanuts has canceled the B-1 bomber now, and I'll bet the vodka is really flowing in the Soviet Air Force.

SFR: Jerry Pourmelle said last night Carter's first official act was to delay the space shuttle for two years.

ANDERSON: Well, it's not really surprising.

SFR: And Walter Mondale believes the space program is the most important issue facing mankind in the 20th century, and he's against it. Well, enough of dreariness.

ANDERSON: Let's get on to something more pleasant.

SFR: I think you make the same sort of analogy in the Polesotechnic League with Van Rijn granddaughter, that their society is going puritanical.

ANDERSON: Yes, I was getting to that. You see something of that today in the whole Ralph Nader bit:



SAVES US
NO END OF
TROUBLE.

NAAW THEY CALL US THE
SECRET POLICE BECAUSE
AFTER WE ARREST YOU,
WE STAMP YOUR FILE
"SECRET".



the consumerism, the ecology movement, etc. What is that but another form of Puritanism. It's a matter of basic attitude toward life.

SFR: It seems that a lot of decadent societies throughout history have been less sensuous than the ones which weren't decadent.

ANDERSON: It's hard to say. I once read an interesting book many years ago that was an attempt to define the concept. It's difficult to do but I think the author fingered it when he wrote that our personal life doesn't matter per se; that's a matter of what you do on your own time, it's your own business and has nothing to do with anyone else. But if you have no sense that there is something larger to live for than yourself, then you're decadent. No matter how austere and honest you may be.

SFR: Sort of like an existentialist.

ANDERSON: Yes, that would be one part of it.

SFR: Outside of a handful, most stories, including some of your best, in the future history, are set on the downward trend, or, if you look at it spiritually, the spiral just above ours.

ANDERSON: Progress does get made, of course. Technological progress seems to be lasting. We don't forget those lessons, but we keep forgetting social lessons. John Campbell once put it quite well: "History does not always repeat herself. Sometimes she screams, 'Won't you ever listen to what I'm trying to tell you!'---and lets fly with a club." (Laughs.)

SFR: When did you start thinking of your future history as a whole?

ANDERSON: I don't know. I have a vague memory that once I was writing something about Flandry and suddenly it occurred to me that Van Rijn might be a folk hero, of whom legends were told. Then I thought, well, maybe these two things could fit together into the same time line. Once the notion grew up that these could fit together, then I began to plan it much more carefully.

SFR: I, and many others, have many questions about your future history and its characters. First of all, might we see more of Aychar-aych?

ANDERSON: Oh, we might. He seems to have a certain fandom of his own. Especially women seem attracted, perhaps because of the pointy ears. (Laughs.) All I ever said was he was missing in action, at the end of the last novel (A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS). He might be around yet.

SFR: He's one of the most alien creations I've ever experienced in science fiction.

ANDERSON: Well, thank you. That's what I was trying for.

SFR: When will the next Flandry novel be written?

ANDERSON: I have no idea. I would like to do one or two more, to complete the biography. It will probably be a few years. I can't say for sure.

SFR: Will we also ever find out whatever happened to Hugh McCormac?

ANDERSON: I might---

SFR: It seems like it could have been his people who founded the Starfog culture.

ANDERSON: Yes, this has been suggested, and it's very possible that they did. I might do it sometime. I don't have any set schedule of things to do. When I'm supposed to do another book or story, I do whatever is interesting at the time.

SFR: How many stories are there after and during the Long Night? I count "Starfog," "Memory," "A Tragedy of Errors," "The Sharing of Flesh," and "The Long Journey." Are there any others?

ANDERSON: You've about named them. There was one that Ace wished the awful title of LET THE SPACEMAN BEWARE! onto. That is definitely in the series.

SFR: Was STAR WAYS part of it?

ANDERSON: No, as a matter of fact I had another future history series a number of years ago, which was planned from the start, in imitation of Heinlein. I wrote a number of stories fitting into that of which STAR WAYS was one.

SFR: The Un-Man series?

ANDERSON: Yes. But I finally gave up on it. Real life caught up to it. For example, World War III did not happen on schedule, which I was perfectly content to be the case.

As a matter of fact I'm not going to keep up the current future history series forever either. It's beginning to get too involuted.

SFR: Is it beginning to tire you?

ANDERSON: No, it isn't that. One gets too thoroughly locked in eventually. What you can do becomes more and more limited, if you try to be consistent at all. However I might do a few more yet. I'd like to do another Flandry or two first.

SFR: No more Van Rijn?

ANDERSON: Maybe, I don't know. I suppose consistency is an overrated virtue anyway. Actually on this future history I have a loose-leaf notebook that's considerably thick by now, as full as it can get, with notes on things, and I'm trying to be consistent.

Even so, some eagle-eyed fan will point out where I have slipped. To which my standard reply is "Perfect consistency is possible only to God Himself, and a close study of scripture will show that even He doesn't always make it."

SFR: In the few more future history stories you're going to do, are you ever going to flesh out any of the other periods?

ANDERSON: I might. The breakdown periods tend to be a little depressing--kind of like Heinlein never got around to writing the really sad parts of his future history series.

SFR: How about before the Poleso-technic League?

ANDERSON: I've done a few. I don't want to bring them too close to the present because that way I might knock myself out like I did with the Un-Man series. I have done a few that can be interpreted

as being in that early period of space travel.

SFR: Outside of PEOPLE OF THE WIND, anything earlier in the Empire?

ANDERSON: I did one once many years ago about the guy who founded the Empire. It was a real clunker. Hardly worth discussing. I've done a few stories about the early days of the colonization of Avalon. But they've mostly appeared outside the regular science fiction markets. A couple of them in BOY'S LIFE, and one or two in Roger Elwood anthologies.

SFR: Also, the post-Long Night. Any more stories planned for that?

ANDERSON: I might. To tell the truth, I don't really know what's been happening to Earth after the collapse. The post-collapse stories are written about people way off in the fringes where they don't know what's been happening at the core. I don't really know myself about the core. I might write it sometime.

SFR: Will Chunderban Desai show up again?

ANDERSON: He was around in a couple of books; a fairly major character in one, and a cameo appearance in another. He might be back, although probably he's retired and writing his memoirs.

SFR: In another area, do you believe that one of the differences between the political right and left in America is that the right

has an overview of history generally lacking in the left?

ANDERSON: Heinlein said once many years ago: "A Liberal is a person who agrees water will run downhill, but feels that thank God it will never reach bottom." (Laughs.) Actually, 'Right' and 'Left' are pretty meaningless terms. They had some meaning, very briefly, during the French revolution when opposing sides happened to sit on the right and left sides of the Assembly hall. That's actually where we get the terms from. By sheer chance the Monarchists and Conservatives, at the time the Estates General were summoned, all sat on the right side...and the radicals were over on the left side. And that's where we get the names from, and they've stuck ever since.

As Jerry Pournelle pointed out quite some time ago, if a right-winger is somebody who wants to keep things pretty much the way they are, or, if anything, go back a bit, and a left-winger is somebody who wants to make radical changes...well, if that's the case, then Hubert Humphrey is a very solid right-winger and Barry Goldwater is a flaming left-winger. Think about it.

SFR: As a matter of fact, Barry Goldwater, Sr. came out in favor of legalized prostitution.

ANDERSON: It's a basic libertarian type of attitude, actually. Jerry went on to develop quite an interesting diagram. The diagram had two axes on it, one being rationalism. To what extent do you think man is capable of consciously controlling his own destiny. The other axis, which you can draw at right angles to the first, being authoritarianism. Do you believe society has a right to control people's individual lives. Now if you use these two parameters you can roughly pinpoint all attitudes.

For example, the communists would be very high on rationalism and authoritarianism. Our socialist liberals somewhat less on both accounts. On the other hand the Nazis were very high on authoritarianism but very low on rationalism. Most of us would be somewhere on middle ground in terms of the diagram. The anarchists would be very low on authoritarianism and very high on rationalism. If you're an anarchist you have a good bit of faith in human rationality.

YOU CAN JAIL SOME
OF THE PEOPLE ALL
OF THE TIME, AND
ALL OF THE PEOPLE
SOME OF THE TIME
BUT YOU CAN'T JAIL
ALL OF THE PEOPLE
ALL OF THE TIME!



SFR: Do you ever subscribe to the Rockefeller-domination "Insider" theory?

WIDERSON: Oh, that. Well, not really, although there are times when one can't help wondering. Certainly in the U.S. we're saddled with a liberal plutocratic establishment, but I doubt if it's the result of a conscious conspiracy if that's what you mean; it probably just happened.

SFR: Every single one of President Carter's top Cabinet appointments and advisors, with the exception of Bert Lance, is a member of the Trilateral Commission, a Rockefeller-founded organization.

WIDERSON: Well, it could be the "Old Boy's Club". Of course one is going to protect one's own interests, and the interests of what is looked upon as one's own plans.

SFR: Are you ever bothered by being labeled a right-wing extremist or a male chauvinist pig?

WIDERSON: No, just amusement or amusement or something. I don't know why I get this name. As for the M.C.P. business, several ladies have told me my heroines are so confident they've given them an inferiority complex. I'm certainly not one who puts down women, at least not liberally.

As for right-wing, I guess I would basically have to call myself small-l libertarian...which of course would have to involve undoing a lot that's been done in this country. I would like to go back to the Wilson administration, abolish it, and start over. I think Woodrow Wilson is probably my pet villain in American history. He gave us all types of social legislation we didn't need, a war we didn't need, etc.

SFR: It is said that a lot of the ills of World War II would not have happened had we not entered World War I.

WIDERSON: Oh, I agree. They were just crazy then, insane, and they would've eventually reached a compromise. And the sinking of the Lusitania was a put-up job if ever there was one.

SFR: Do you see individual freedom existing in the future?

WIDERSON: I'd like to, but who knows? There are also various kinds or dimensions of freedom.

As a writer, I, for example, have a number of freedoms now I

did not have ten or twenty years ago. I can use sex now more, in my work, get a little explicit when I see fit. But on the other hand that's fairly trivial. Any writer worth his salt ought to be able to work his way around such restrictions...and they used to.

These days the state, generally, does not concern itself with whom we may be sleeping. It's gradually getting from its concern with drugs and what we put into our bodies; it's certainly more liberal with pot, for instance.

This is...well, I won't exactly call it progress...it's regaining something we never should've lost. On the other hand, think of all the curtailments of liberty we're having forced on us. Starting with a monstrous income tax which amounts to forcing you to work for the government for something like half your time.

SFR: It seems like they penalize good work---and reward you if you're poor.

ANDERSON: Oh, sure.

SFR: Of course then there's welfare Cadillac--

ANDERSON: Actually most of the welfare chiselers have been college bred whites very consciously milking the system. Most of the genuine ones haven't liked being on welfare at all. Either they're simply unable to work, old or crippled. It's good that we can support people like that. I'm not complaining.

A lot of time the real problem is that the stupid welfare system is self-perpetuating. We could probably, as a matter of fact, solve half our unemployment problem by getting rid of the minimum wage law. But doing that is a political impossibility.

SFR: As a matter of fact we could solve a lot of our resource and environmental problems if we have the guts to go out into space. Do you think we have the guts?

ANDERSON: At the moment I doubt it. We might make it, yet I'm inclined to agree with Jerry Pournelle, that if we don't make it in the next twenty or thirty years we never will. By that time we'd be too poor, resources would be used up in a couple of years. It's conceivable private enterprise might do it, because of the jobs, yet. Probably not in this country, but there might be a country situated on the equator which will

have the wit to make very liberal arrangements for private space industry. I could see Peru, for example, doing it. They're beautifully set up for it, and all they would have to do is set up laws and a stable enough regime to attract the capital. They could really take off from there.

SFR: And once you get out there, you'd have the economic power to rule Earth.

ANDERSON: Yes. As a matter of fact, this current novel I'm tinkering on presupposes that Peru does get out and is the most important country on Earth, a couple of hundred years in the future.

SFR: What sources of energy would you like to see emphasis put on for the future?

ANDERSON: I don't think there's any single source. We'd probably want a mix. I would certainly like to see more work done on fusion. But let's not overrate it; fusion has its own problems, especially the kind they're working on currently. The projected types will put out just as much radioactive garbage as fission plants do. And in some respects it's worse--in terms of disposing of it. Because tritium will be one byproduct and I don't know exactly how you're going to get that out of the biosphere. There are some fusion possibilities that don't have these problems.

Biological systems, of course. Solar energy-- I don't really see much prospect for solar energy right here on Earth because the very most you can get is 1.4 kilowatts per square meter. That's all there is, there ain't no more. And that's only on a clear day at the right time of year and latitudes. But if you put solar collectors in orbit there doesn't seem to be any limit.

As I said, there doesn't seem to be any one system in particular, but of all the prospects potentially the most important would be orbiting solar collectors.

SFR: Are you also interested in the O'Neill colonies?

ANDERSON: Oh very much, of course.

SFR: Would you have any stories by any chance set in one of these?

ANDERSON: No, I don't.

SFR: Another problem is the rapid change of the technological de-

tails.

ANDERSON: Well, you can always assume it will change fast. The plans go back and forth and now the last I heard they're beginning to think less in terms of Lagrangian orbits. But these are details. Basically I want us up there doing it, however we do it.

SFR: How much do you make per book, say take FIRETIME?

ANDERSON: Oh I can't answer that because returns tend to come in over many, many years. Something might go completely out of print in the USA and some foreign country buys rights, and that's some income. Then say somebody back in the States buys paperback rights for the second or third time.

SFR: Do you ever try to get your novels back in print? For instance, currently every Flandry novel is out of print.

ANDERSON: I should make more of an effort. Some time this year I'm going back to New York and pound a lot of desks, and take care of a lot of business. I've been somewhat remiss about it.

SFR: Do you think you could get some publisher to do a Flandry series, like Berkley's doing Van Rijn, and get across that Flandry and Van Rijn, etc. are connected series?

ANDERSON: I might. Well, it's the kind of thing one has to talk a publisher into doing. Theoretically that's what agents are for, but I find that unfortunately an author has to do a lot of work on his own in that respect.

SFR: What do you feel about the Lester del Rey conflict of interest in ANALOG?

ANDERSON: I doubt it. I never gave it any particular thought. I know Lester is a very honest man and would certainly not wittingly slant things his own way. Well, it's obvious that any books which appear under his own imprint he's liked or he wouldn't publish them. As far as I know he's never hesitated to put in a good word for anybody else's book that he's also liked.

SFR: What do you like best and least about the sf field today and what do you think about it generally?

ANDERSON: Actually, I don't read

a hell of a lot of science fiction these days; too many other things to keep up with. My wife has more time to read than I do, and she keeps up with it much better than I do, so she can warn me when I'm starting to nurture an idea that has been done before.

However, of what I do read, it seems to me there's an awful lot of good stuff going on. The field is in very good condition these days with an awful lot of talent and a lot of interesting things being done.

And I think it's tending more and more back--- no, I hate that word...mainstream...but let's say it's closing the gap. After all, this 'category fiction' is mostly a 20th Century idiosyncrasy to start with. Before, if H.G. Wells, or H. Rider Haggard, etc., wrote something we call science fiction today, it had no such label. It was just out there in the common pool of literature. I think we're tending more and more that way; science fiction is returning by the back door and I think this is a very healthy development. I would like to see the science fiction label disappear altogether.

SFR: Do you feel that sf writers today---like a lot of the public---are beginning to suffer from Future Shock?

ANDERSON: I don't know. I read the book of that title, of course, and it was interesting, but I wonder if the whole thing hasn't been exaggerated.

SFR: Toffler recommended sf as an antidote to Future Shock.

ANDERSON: (Laughs.) Although actually when very startling developments happen, science fiction people tend to be caught as flatfooted as everybody else. Probably people, whether they have heard of science fiction or not, are getting more and more accustomed to the idea that the future is not going to be a replay of the past. In fact, so many science fiction notions that twenty or thirty years ago would have only made sense to science fiction people are common currency nowadays. Robots, time travel, etc. Look at what a huge popular success STAR WARS is, for example. It's very elementary science fiction, a lot of fun... it's like finding a brand new 1930 AMAZING STORIES. And the point is here you have this huge public, most of whom have never looked at a piece of printed science fiction in their

lives---still they're eating it up and having no difficulty understanding it at all. So these notions are becoming more and more current. It's possible we've had our future shock and gotten over it.

SFR: What direction do you see your writing going?

ANDERSON: I don't know. I want to keep trying to do new things. I don't want to keep doing the same thing over and over forever. I don't have any particular plan; whatever looks interesting at the time. For example, this current thing I'm tinkering on, is certainly the longest thing I've ever done, and I like to think it's the best. Certainly it's the most ambitious. It's in a self-contained universe. I've been doing some experimenting there and I hope it's successful. What I do beyond that I don't know. I just hope it won't be the same as in the past.

SFR: Thank you very much, Mr. Anderson.

ANDERSON: Oh, you're very welcome.

OH, LOVELY! THE EARTHANS
HAVE CLEARLED US A
LANDING SPACE!

HEAD FOR
THE SOUTH
BRONX!



"When the definitive history is written, it will have to be said that the pornographers fought the censors to the death, then turned around and committed suicide."

---Larry Shaw

'In fact this brings me back to the slush pile. I get scads of stories to read that explain Biblical miracles by means of aliens. Shades of Velikovsky.'

(When and where did Velikovsky mention aliens in his books?)

'This is one of the categories I suggest would-be writers avoid despite von Daniken's doing so well with it. Of course if Roger Elwood were still publishing...'

(Sorry to be so picky, Lynne, but you show a very fuzzy mind, an imprecision of statement, that irritates the hell out of me. Roger Elwood did not publish anything. He edited. He packaged. He wrote a little bit. And von Daniken did not write science fiction. He wrote non-fiction (although he seemed to make up some of the things he wrote about).

'On Sandra Meisel's letter: I publish a zine which I copyrighted in my name. Of course with only one issue, I haven't had any pirating problems yet. I did get a request for a right to reprint an article and I said sure, just say where you got it from. I suppose Sandra should have asked Leland about reprinting but he certainly overreacted. I can't see getting that upset over anything. I know Rick Brooks, whose article on Andre Norton, was in THE BOOK OF ANDRE NORTON, got stung but don't know the details.'

'I echo Schweitzer's comments about writing in plain English. Any slush pile story I get that is ultra fancy gets put on the bottom of the pile. I also am suspicious of stories I don't understand. I'm a mensa member (or I used to be) so if I find it difficult, what will the average reader of GALAXY do? I often suspect that a lot of obscure stuff gets published because everyone is afraid to admit he/she can't make heads or tails of it. Also JJ Pierce is not a "new wave" editor.'

'"Houston, Houston..." brings up something that has begun to annoy me lately. First the story is competently written and did hold my interest but it is a hate story. Any story which writes off half the human race as monstrous, and gets awards for doing so, disturbs me. I don't hate men. I don't have to hate men to say that there have been injustices against women. But this is just part of a larger pattern (so is the Bakke case) that allows statements to be made of how rotten men, WASPS, Italians, Poles, ethnics, Catholics, Puritanical sorts

are but would crucify any writer who made the same statements about Women, Blacks, Chicanos, Indians.

'I guess that's about it except to state that self-knowledge and self-acceptance have been basic themes in all of Marion Zimmer Bradley's work.'

2-21-78 I have incipient high blood pressure, sayeth my doctor. Which does not surprise me, since mine has been a stroke family. (Mother at age 67, father at 73.)

And so I am taking minimal doses of meprobamate two times a day. The stuff works, too; brings my pressure way down to 120-70 range. [I tried one of those public, automatic blood-pressure machines at Sears and it told me 187 over 110 or something, so I hid myself the Greeley Clinic. posthaste and with alacrity.]

I also have arthritis in my back, hands, arms, knees.... (You name it, I've got twinges, aches and pains.) And a squashed disc in my upper spine which makes turning my head a youp! experience.

But ol' doc, he say, take Aspirin-D. And you can live with it. How true. [Aspirin-D is aspirin with a heavy Maalox coating to protect the stomach lining from too much aspirin corrosion.] I take 8 of those babies a day. Sometimes more.

I also am a rigid, squirming, anxious, neurotic in a dentist's chair. [HE'S INVADING MY TERRITORY! HE'S GOT A HYPERDERMIS! HE'S GOING TO---- AAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHHH!!!!]

All this to say I had a dental appointment today at noon and kept it. But to make it possible I took four times my usual dose of Meproamate (twice my allowable one-time dose), and got through the session with the remark to him: "As Rock Hudson said to Doris Day, 'Be gentle.'" He laughed and proceeded to USE THAT NEEDLE.... Then that high-speed whining drill that seems vicious enough to go through a tooth, a jaw, a skull like a hot ice-pick through butter.

To come back up to something approximating working mentality from the sweet, smiling, CALLILIL lassitude visited upon my by those trunks, I had to drink two strong cups of coffee. Now I'm perking along quite nicely. [But I have a nagging question---doesn't the coffee undo the blood-pressure lowering effect of the drug by stimulating my heart to pump faster, and hence upping my blood-pressure?]

To answer a question in your minds: my ailments are relatively minor and chronic, and with the help of my trunks and pain killers I will be able to go on for years and years, bedeviling you with SFR in all its myriad shifts, Changes, formats, Alterations....

Ah, yes, last night we went to see FLESH GORDON and THE GROOVE TUBE at a \$1.25 per admission theater (up rom 99¢ recently).

FLESH GORDON is a ham-handed, inept, badly acted satire on what we older boys dearly loved in the thirties and forties.

The names---Flesh Gordon, Dale Ardour, Dr. Jerkoff, Emperor Wang... A clutch of overage juveniles made the film. And for all the nudity and sexual hanky-panky, it was exquisitely anti-erotic. You might call it a grope-and-run epic.

THE GROOVE TUBE is a savagely mocking, shocking satire at times, and at other times a great fun time. [I loved the upside-down penis and balls made up to look like a man's eyes and nose, lecturing on the evils of venereal disease.]

LETTER FROM JOHN-HENRI HOLMBERG
January 25, 1978

'Last time I wrote, which I figure was about three or four years ago, I was happily editing the Askind & Khrmekull sf line in which I had the pleasure of bringing out the first Swedish translations of books ---many books---by Jack Vance, Brian Aldiss, Ursula LeGuin, and Chip Delany. Then the bastards folded my line (early 1975) and I went to work in an excruciatingly mundane job, as informations officer with the Stockholm Student Union Federation where I finally gave up in March 1977; on April 1st of that year, I switched to a full-time writing and editing job with the Swedish Conservative Party, now one of the three parties in the present Government. But these are all build-ups... because last Fall, I launched a publishing branch of the Scandinavian Science Fiction Society, the largest sf group around and non-profit as well; the line carries only original Swedish fiction and non-fiction, has issued three books thus far, has contracted for another 12, and is doing quite well. And on Sept. 1st, I contracted as editor-in-chief of Lindfors, a small mundane publisher intending to do 20 books a year; since signing, I've contracted the first 25 books for this house including some stuff I've been wanting to bring out in Sweden for ten

or fifteen years---Ayn Rand's *WE THE LIVING* AND *THE FOUNTAINHEAD*, Mary Renault's novels about Alexander the Great, Max Dimot's *JENS, GOD, AND HISTORY*, Shirley Jackson's novels (I have three signed for at the moment) ---as well as some new things, like Ursula LeGuin's *VERY FAR AWAY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *FROM UNDER THE RUBBLE*, and John Mortimer's *WILL SHAKESPEARE*.

'And it's still build-up---because last Saturday, January 21st, I signed a contract to edit a new sf book line with another Swedish company. I'll be doing this line in cooperation with Per Insulander and John Agren, two other good fen and true, but there'll be enough for all of us, since what we have a contract to do is 12 novels yearly, a bi-monthly magazine, and an annual original anthology (well, original to Swedish anyway.) Which will make us, or our line, the biggest single outlet for original sf editions in Scandinavia at present. (Sam Lundwall's Delta publishes about ten original and perhaps 5 or 6 reprint books a year, plus a bi-monthly subscription-only magazine.)

'The address is: Alpha Science Fiction, P.O. Box 3273, S-103 65 Stockholm, Sweden, if anybody is interested. We'll start publishing books in October, and the magazine will be launched in January, 1979.

'One thing this will enable me to do, at last, is to put on a new, clean conscience and write another letter to Jack Vance. I did love the interview in *SFR 23*: Jack's particular kind of wry irony came across beautifully, and I only hope those of your readers who never had the opportunity to meet him could appreciate it as well. Because even though the two books I did bring out previously (*THE STAR KING & THE KILLING MACHINE*) didn't sell too well in Sweden, I certainly intend trying again to find the audience Jack ought to have here as well. Although perhaps this time I might begin by doing complete one-volume novels---*EMPHYRIO*, or *THE BLUE WORLD*---rather than series.

'Anyway, let me return the compliment Jack gives in the interview: not only do I count him among my friends as well, but he was also a perfectly ideal guest of honor at a convention (and the one he came to was far from a place to rest at; we had about 500 attendees, making it the biggest one thus far in Sweden): congenial, humorous, always friendly even to the people whose English must have been almost totally impossible to understand, signing away books continuously and including the terribly botched and cut version of *CITY OF THE CHASM*.

'But perhaps the most embarrass-

ing---and memorable---moment to those of us who arranged the thing was when Jack showed up at the convention hall on the day after the con, at noon, picked up a broom and started sweeping the damned floors. This is something I had never thought to see a guest of honor do, nor do I believe many of them apart from Jack would ever get the idea to extend his attendance even to helping in the cleanup afterwards.

'Which, at least to my mind, makes him not only a brilliant, wonderful writer, but a truly wonderful guy as well.'

(I wonder if Harlan will wait tables at the Awards Banquet? No, no, he'd be accused of taking a job away from a waitress. You just can't win.)

8 MILES PER GALLON
45 MPH TOP SPEED, BUT
YOU LOSE WEIGHT WHILE
YOU DRIVE!



'Which was all just meant to tell you that we (and science fiction, thank you) are still pretty much alive and well in Sweden still, and why not come visit us some time? You'd feel at home; the club I mentioned earlier now has a large basement all its own, and I'm sure you'd add attraction to it. Or, if not you, certainly Alter---considering some of the members we have to suffer, to get Alter we might even consider paying half the air fare...'

((Listen, if you can lure Alter away from here---and keep him!---more power to you. Trouble is he has rearranged all my mental furniture, set up a huge (he says valuable) used synapse collection, and tapped into my central cortex. He loafs, sloths, feeds, makes obscene suggestions to house guests...and refuses to leave!))

'I realize I ought to write something constructive and serious and maybe academic just to show that I haven't wholly lost the touch, but I'll save it for the author sketches we intend to put in the backs of the sf novels we'll be doing. (Yep, ever since my days at Askilld & K&M--

skull I've included an essay on the author, plus a bibliography, in the sf books I've edited. Now why don't the people at Ballantine take the hint and make the *IR BEST OF* --- series perfect by adding bibliographies as well? In the States the readers might even make some good use of them.)'

(Much good luck with your new lines and please keep us advised.)

HAROLD ROBBINS...

He is sad-eyed, 61 years old, a millionaire, given to flamboyant clothes.

He was abandoned as an infant on the steps of a Catholic orphanage in New York's Hell's Kitchen.

He says, "Life is a toy. A game. I've been up and down. In and out. I've been in male bordellos and, yeah, I've been in jail. But hell, what I have has absolutely nothing to do with money. What I've built is a life."

An advance for books like *THE CARPETBAGGERS*, 79 PARK AVENUE, and his most recent, *DREAMS DIE FIRST*, is \$2.5 million. He has homes in Beverly Hills and Cannes, France. He has a yacht.

He did not begin writing until he was 31.

He bangs out his books on an old typewriter using the two-finger method.

"I'm not creating literary landmarks. I've just painted characters based on actual people I've known. I've seen the bad side of life. I know all about failure. It has been my education. Hell, I never knew that book publishers wanted an outline of the story. I never knew you had to do summaries of the characters. And, jeez, I never knew you couldn't end a sentence with a preposition."

Over nine million copies of Robbins' books are sold every year.

His opinions of some other writers:

Truman Capote: "He's a society pet. Like a marmoset."

Norman Mailer: "He could have been a great novelist. But he's too chauvinistic."

Gore Vidal: "I don't read him."

He wants his readers to believe he has lived life, not merely observed it. "I mean it, I've seen everything...done everything...sexually...the dope scene...the male whorehouses...the gays..."

He rarely laughs. His happiest expression is a weary half-smile.

"I'm surrounded by successful people. They're all unhappy."

"But I've got a contained life. I'm a happy man."

'Philip K. Dick's letter (SFR page 61) flabbergasted me. This was the first that I knew that he'd written a letter to Pamela Sargent and to the SFWA Forum that he'd broken "radically with Phil Farmer as to the admission of Lem into SFWA on a normal, dues-paying basis". Or that it had been published in the Forum. Or that he'd disclaimed "the reactionary position which Phil Farmer had taken". (Italics are mine.)

'I'd resigned from the SFWA a long time ago and so haven't been getting the Forum or Bulletin. Originally, I'd stated in my letter of resignation that I was dropping out for a year, for personal reasons. But so far I haven't seen any reason why I should rejoin. So my absence will be more than a year.

'Before I sent in the letter which caused all the uproar (SFWA Forum, April, 1976), I'd talked to Phil Dick on the phone. I offered, if my memory serves me right, to send a copy so he could authorize my statements or remove certain phrases. He refused and then gave me permission to write what I pleased. Or words to that effect.

'He had my home address and phone number. Why, when he read the letter in the Forum, didn't he call or write me? But I've heard not a mumbled word from him about the matter. Certainly, if I'd been him, I would have communicated.

'The pejorative "reactionary" puzzles me. Neither Dick nor I considered the matter to be political or ideological. At least, I didn't. Dick's complaint was mainly that Lem was ripping him off, though he had some others. (See his "Open Letter to Philip Jose Farmer in the Forum, Oct., 1975, in which he thanked me for mentioning his beef against Lem and for zapping Lem for his arrogant sneering putdown of all American s-f writers except for a few whom he damned with faint praise.)

"Reactionary" is an item of duckspeak used by members of the ultraleft. It's meaningless, automatic, a conditioned verbal reflex, mindless.

'When I wrote to Andy Offutt that Dick and I were resigning because of Lem, I had no idea that Lem would be kicked out because of the letter. I didn't intend or even think that that would happen. Neither did Dick, according to a letter of his in the Forum.

'I still believe that Lem should never have been invited to be an honorary member. Nor that he should have "accepted with thanks" an honor from an organization whom he considered to be a bunch of talentless jerks. But, once he'd been made a member, he shouldn't have been kicked out. Even if his membership was invalid because of a technicality. I said, "Fuck it!" and withdrew. I felt a little guilty, and I was upset by those who insisted that the right of free speech was involved when this had nothing to do with the matter. They were the ones who were intruding an ideological issue into the affair. So I extruded and kept on going.

'The whole business was unfortunate and badly done, and I include myself in the criticism. If I'd known what was going to happen, that is, that Lem would be hurled headlong from SFWA heaven with furious combustion and a lot of bullshit, I would not have written that letter. I'd have quietly dropped out. If Lem had joined again as a dues-paying member, I would have resigned. He has a right to say what he pleases, where he pleases. Anybody does. But I have a right not to belong to a society of which he is a member.

'I have a high admiration for Dick as a writer and as a human being. I'd hate to think he regarded me as a warmongering capitalist, an exploiter of the working class and a running dog.'

((Appropos of duckspeak: I'd rather be a warmonger, a capitalist, and a running dog exploiter of the working class than a peace mongering socialist chained dog being exploited by the working class.

((Some people prefer heat to light; preconceptions and dogma are so nice to come home to after a hard day in the real world.))

3-7-78 I learned--belatedly--that Don Day had died in January, a few days after the entry I made in these pages. I don't know any of the details, and don't want to know. Don's death is depressing. He was 69.

I've been a week pasting up pages for this issue, and an ominous foreboding is chilling my bones. I suspect--

'GEIS! What in hell do you think you're doing? Have you any idea how many pages this issue will run to at present projections? Do you know--'

Alter, please. I have a headache.

'You always plead 'headache' when I'm trying to read the riot act to you!'

There is a relationship. If you'll just stop shouting in my head...

'WHERE ELSE CAN I SHOUT? YOU DUMB ASS! YOU MORON. LOOK AT THESE FIGURES!'

- 9 pages of "Report From Alternate Earth 666";
- 2 "Close Encounters-Three Views";
- 3 the Scithers Interview;
- 3 the Le Guin Interview;
- 10 the Palmer article;
- 6 the Anderson Interview;
- 3 "The Vivisector" by Schweitzer;
- 2 "Small Press Notes";
- 3 "The Alter-Ego Viewpoint";
- 4 "Other Voices";
- 17 "Alien Thoughts";
- 3 "The Archives."

65

"That comes to SIXTY-FIVE PAGES and that is not counting the 18 or 19 pages of my ONE IMMORTAL MAN yet to be pasted up! Geis, already you are in serious, desperate, horrible trouble. HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO KEEP WITHIN YOUR 80 PAGE FORMAT?"

Ge...ahhh...I didn't realize...

And I've got more books to review, there is at least one more page of Archives to include, another page of Small Press Notes, some Prozin Notes, a lot more letters and Alien Thoughts to think..."

Heh, heh...well...

"Don't sit just here with that shit-eating grin on your face---you remind me too much of Carter. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS?"

Alter, we could postpone printing your novel. I mean--

"NO, NO, NO, NO!! I know that routine. There'll always be no-room for my story!"

We could go to 96 page just this once, and--

"No! The bank account can't stand it! Have you seen the latest balance? Out the Palmer article. Put it over to #26, and STOP accepting all these interviews! We are only going to have room for one interview per issue, and---"

No, Alter, You Go Too Far. I insist on printing good interviews. I insist on SFR being more than an all-Geis/Alter magazine, as you are aiming for.

"Well, sure, Geis. Keep the

TRESPASSING!
PROSECUTORS WILL
BE VIOLATED

"Other Voices" and keep a short article, and maybe one or two interviews---"

How's this, Alter? I do bump the Palmer article to next issue, and I cut short the current-events commentary ("Reports From Alternate Earth #666") and offer the readers a separate zine devoted to Geis/Alter commentary on what's going on now?

"Well..."

I'd keep "Alien Thoughts" as a diary devoted to matters science fictional, literary and etc, with extensive commentary on letters. And you could keep your review column and your serialized novel.

"Well...I have plans for at least four novels after ONE IMMORTAL MAN, Geis."

F-four? Alter----

"I've found I enjoy writing sf, so I will insist on a goodly share of SFR every issue for that purpose. Do you dare say me nay, Geis? (Remember I have one tendrill always ready to excite your central pain ganglions. Just a mere touch...)"

YEEEEEOW!! *Gasp* This is blackmail---and I gladly give in. You win, Alter. SFR is yours to command.

"Fine. Just so we understand each other. Just so you realize I am master here."

Jesus. First you take over my column in GALAXY...and now SFR. What is left to me?

"Why; your new personalzine, Geis. Your current-events commentary. You have free reign there. I will never interfere. Now, I'm going down to the medulla oblongata for a nap. You go ahead and tell the readers the details of your new zine."

Thanks.

Details of the new zine will be found at the end of "Reports From Alternate Earth #666" which follows this page.

Privately, I fear Alter is too optimistic about this issue staying at 80 pages.

There has been a great outpouring of letters-of-comment on two topics: Harlan Ellison's Statement last issue (and my Comment), and on the Creationist vs. Evolution controversy that has run several issues in SFR.

I've published a few letters on these matters, but cannot accommodate all, even though almost all the letters are highly pertinent, well-written and Worthy.

As matters stand now the Creationist position is outvoted, outgunned, in flames, listing to starboard and not expected to live.

Those who wrote on the position Harlan is taking in re supporting ERA as Guest of Honor at the upcoming WorldCon, supported my position of distaste for politicizing the Convention by about a three to one ratio.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR WRITING.

3-18-78 It's been weeks since I wrote in this diary section, and a lot of thinking has passed through the brain.

"Damn right it has. Tell them what we've decided, Geis."

The problem is too much material ---my own and others'. All very good stuff. Interviews, especially. Elton Elliott just completed an interview in person and by phone with Ben Bova which is a blockbuster. Ben is a very intense person, with strong opinions, and Elton has asked some provocative, tough questions.

It's a crying shame to let that interview sit for six to nine months.

So what to do?
Go to 96 pages?
Go bi-monthly?

"Yes, to both. We go to 96 pages this issue only. Then---"

Let me tell it, Alter.
"Yeah, yeah..."

From the comments I've received over the years, from subscribers and contributors, bi-monthly would be the overwhelming choice.

So I propose to go ahead (pending word from the Postal Service on the procedures involved in shifting to 6-times-yearly with a second-class permit), and pending an estimate on what the printing bill would be for 56-page newsprint with a heavy cover ala SFR #15 and #23.

Bear in mind we are into a heavy inflationary period now. Everything is going up. And there is another scheduled postage increase for July.

I hate to raise prices. But I got to. I've gone from 48 pages to 80 pages without raising subscription prices. Now, I'm going to 60 pages (including that heavy cover stock) and am increasing the subscription price to \$1.25 per issue, which runs to \$7.50 per year. And I'll have to ask a full \$15. for two years. The retail price will stay the same: \$1.50 per issue. Back issues will go to \$1.25 per issue.

The bi-monthly publishing schedule will be: JULY, SEPT., NOV., JAN., MARCH, MAY.

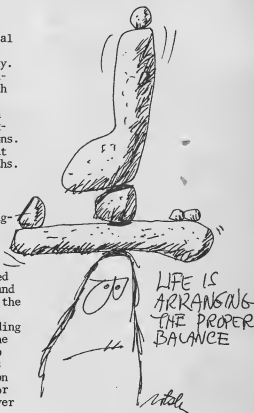
This increase in pages-publishing is being made possible by Elsie

(Lady Companion) who has been typing most of the non-diary, non-Geis material for the past few issues, as well as the bookwork and day-to-day filling of orders. All hail to a lady without whom my life would be a shambles. She lights up my life.

The bi-monthly schedule means the news in SFR will be more up-to-date, and the reviews more worthwhile because more timely.

Current subscriptions will be honored on an issues-owed basis.

That's about it. Hope this change is welcome to you.



I see I forgot to list foreign subscription rates.

Canada, U.K. Australia, etc. will be U.S.\$8.25 for six issues, and U.S. \$16.50 two years.

3-22-78 I called the Postal Service and a change in frequency is simple: fill out two copies of form #3510 and pay a \$15. fee. This issue of SFR is thus officially the first bi-monthly issue. The new schedule and rates must appear in this issue on the masthead.



AGENT A. L. TERREGO 542-26-9596

REQUEST: TRANSFER

Request transfer to Earth Prime for R&R. I've been in this alternate Earth for fifty years now, and my first term is up. I cannot understand the delay in replacing me or processing my papers. Please expedite.

REPORT ON YEAR 1977 FROM VIP NATION, AMERICA, POV W/M, PORTLAND, OR.

The single most important and generally unadmitted factor operating in this alternate Earth is the continuing effects of the massive increase in energy costs since 1973.

As nations and individuals refuse to lower their standard of living because of the increased costs of all goods and services resulting from the energy cost increase, they have resorted to debt.

Thus nations borrow and inflate their currencies, individuals borrow and run up debts to stores, and assume very large mortgages at ruinous interest rates. They buy cars, for instance at historically unheard-of interest rates for ever-longer periods.

This process of debt accumulation can continue only so long.

At the present time the so-called LDCs (Lesser Developed Countries) are massively in debt to the industrialized countries' banks and international lending agencies. Many LDCs are actually bankrupt and are being kept afloat with new loans in order to prevent a necessary admission of loss of assets by banks/governments, a panic, a wholesale declaration of refusals-to-pay by other countries and individuals. Once the unraveling of the debt structure begins it is impossible to salvage.... The process goes through various stages, reaches ever greater numbers of people, and causes immense hardship and tremendous political and social upheavals.

The ruling class/cliقة knows this and is desperately trying to keep the debt house-of-cards standing.

But their days are numbered. Their moves are increasingly restricted, because the debt load is so huge and the balance so shaky, any adjustment to correct the latest vulnerability almost instantly causes another imperative problem. And the problems are surfacing ever more frequently and are ever more severe. Soon nothing than can be done will prevent the collapse.

I'M PARANOID, BUT
AM I PARANOID
ENOUGH?



In the United States, for instance, the government is caught in a classic bind.

It is obligated by law to huge pensions for retired citizens. Government-engineered inflation has steadily reduced the value of its currency, requiring ever-higher payments and ever-higher taxes, in spite of ever higher federal deficits.

Inflating the money supply permits the creation of ever more debt accumulation and keeps the economy going. If the government stopped inflating and stopped the ever-increasing and ever-necessary debt increases, the economy would collapse, and the world economy would collapse.

But continuing inflation and higher taxes discourages saving/accumulation of capital, and discourages risk-taking and discourages ambition and incentive to work. Thus sooner or later the economy stagnates and, unable to expand in real terms, collapses.

In short, the inflation-fix will soon no longer do its job, because everyone is aware of it, takes self-protective steps, and thus nullifies it.

At the present time it appears that the government of the United States may act to seriously crimp the use of private cars through gas and oil taxes and price increases. Also possible is gasoline rationing. This will cause a depression and an economic cataclysm worldwide.

Yet the government is forced to seek gas and oil price increases because of the monstrous trade deficit which is devaluing the currency at an alarming rate and which will/is increasing costs for all imported goods and hence increasing the real cost of living for the citizens. This translates to less

disposable income and a shrinking of purchasing power, which means a stop to the accumulation of individual debt, which means at least a recession, which leads to a crumbling of the vulnerable international debt structure.

The world is almost at the end of the plank, there are sharks in the sea and there is an unrelenting saber forcing it forward....

#

In the geopolitical arena, the target of the international banks and transnational corporations is the government of South Africa. If control of the region's vast natural wealth can be transferred to the rulers of these vast (but hurting) world-oriented centers of power and influence, the status-quo could perhaps be stabilized.

The mass media of the U.S.A and Europe are being used to wage a propaganda campaign against the South African government. The result desired is a weak black government which can be manipulated to the banks' and transnationals' advantage.

In the middle east the Egyptian government has been bought by the United States government. Sadat is acutely aware that only the U.S. can or will provide the money and credits to keep his country's economy from foundering and his people from famine. He is forced to sue for peace. Israel, too, is dependent on the United States, and Jordan has long been a client-state of the U.S. It is ironic that U.S. Army technicians are now in Egypt keeping the Russian anti-aircraft missile batteries in working order, for the Egyptians, since the Russians bungled their chances to disrupt the Western rulers' control of the area. They found the game too expensive and were hampered by clumsiness and their own country's shoddy, unreliable products.

The rulers of Saudi Arabia and Iran have obviously reached an agreement or accommodation with the rulers of the West, and so the Arab-Israeli confrontations will stop. The Palestine peoples will have to accept what is given them in the way of a "homeland." The Russian-backed Syria cannot do anything but fret, fume and call names. However, the negotiations will be long, frustrating, and may fail. Effective control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel is the sticking point.

1-1-78 U.S. Senator Howard Baker, who has his eye set on the 1980 Republican nomination for President, is now going to visit the Panama Canal Zone (with Sens. Chafee and Garn, and White House aide Frank Moore). Where before he said he could make up his mind on whether to vote yea or nay on the new Panama Canal Treaty, now he finds it necessary to go for a first-hand look after receiving a written invitation from Gen. Omar Torrijos, Panama's leader.

What is not generally known is that Republican Senator Baker is a member of the Rockefeller establishment's Council on Foreign Relations, and has been for years.

He has been playing a coy, publicity-grabbing game of indecision while actually in the Yea camp. This visit to Panama is pure window dressing for his media-important public announcement that he will vote for the new treaty.

There are no doubt other "undecided" Senators actually in the bag for the treaty.

A further sign of the terminal stage of debt accumulation in this country is the increasing "use" of second mortgages by home buyers.

A case in point is that of a local couple who started paying on their home in 1967. The price was \$14,000. Now they want to open a bakery and find "their" home is worth over \$45,000. They have in ten years managed to reduce the principle owed to \$12,000. A local financial institution was found very willing to give them a \$15,000. second mortgage on the property, at an interest rate in excess of 10%.

Think about that.

If they keep the house they will be paying in excess of \$2,000. per year in interest. They will never be able to pay off those mortgages. In fact, they know it. They want to sell the house for its current market value, pay off the mortgages, and...what? Live in an apartment?

This couple were never home owners. They have always been debtors and debt patsys. As are most of the couples sitting in their nice 50,000 dollar homes, pretending to be home-owners, while paying, over a lifetime, \$150,000 to \$200,000 for a \$50,000 house.

But, of course, most people expect inflation to continue evermore, and expect the house to constantly appreciate in value.

But anything's value is measured by supply and demand factors. If the demand for new houses dries up, and if the inflation machine ever stops....

1-2-78 While in Poland, President Carter promised the Poles credits to buy U.S. agricultural products. While in Iran he promised to okay more sophisticated military hardware purchases by the Shah. And now, in India, he has promised to send nuclear fuel.

I wish I could persuade him to make a state visit to my free-holding; I could use about 1,000 Prestologs.

1-5-78 The real reason for Sen. Howard Baker's highly publicized visit to Panama is now apparent. He has informed Torrijos the treaty hasn't much chance of being ratified by the U.S. Senate as the treaty is now writ; it will require a few changes to placate the conservatives in re the assured neutrality of the canal operation by Panama after 2000 AD.

Now Torrijos will make a big show of consulting the Panamanian cabinet and a compromise will be reached, a codical signed (or something similar), and Baker, "placated", with a clear conscience and fat with VIP publicity and much leverage for his bid for a Republican presidential nomination in 1980, will announce he can now vote for the treaty---and enough other "undecided" senators will jump on the bandwagon, and the Rockefeller power locus will have gotten what it wants---access to the Canal Zone lands through its leverage with the Panamanian govt., and assurance that its loans to the Panamanian govt. will be paid by increased tolls and "favors".

The Treasury Dept. and the Federal Reserve Board moved publicly to stop the catastrophic devaluation of the US\$ overseas by finally utilizing dollar credits with foreign government central banks.

This move was forced by the Saudi Arabians when they told Cart-

er bluntly to stop cheapening the dollar or face compensating oil price rises starting in June or July.

This is an illustration of what I said a few days ago: inflation is only workable as long as the victims (citizens, foreigners) will sit still for the ripoff.

The Saudi's have taken inflation-reductions in the price of oil for several years, but obviously enough is enough.

The basic problem of our massive balance-of-payments deficit (\$30 billion in 1977, compared to 6 billion in 1976 and a surplus in most previous years) has still to be faced and solved. Evasion will only bring much heavier price increases, loss of purchasing power, higher unemployment....

There are no easy solutions---only painful ones.

There will be a 500-person gathering of the Establishment called by the Carter administration starting Jan 29. It will discuss 'balanced national growth' and the White House announcement said the conference is designed to 'produce ideas and recommendations on some of the most serious long-term growth and development issues facing America in the years ahead.'

Yeah. Like how to cope with the coming depression, how to avoid blame... Actually, the decisions have been made. The conference is PR to publicly surface the problems and impress the public, and help prepare the public for crisis moves. The magic word 'sacrifices' will be in the air again. When a politician or a financial giant uses that word he means you, not him, and he has his eyes on your money and/or your freedom.

1-7-78 The Dow-Jones Industrial Average "the stock market" for most people, dropped 37 points



this week and penetrated decisively the 800 'resistance level' because of bad news on the continuing devaluation of the dollar, and because the prime interest rate is being notched upward one more time---to 8%.

Cheaper dollars means higher prices in a few months. Too, the farmers are tired of being the fall-guy and are agitating for fair prices (we've been keeping the Consumer Price Index down for three years by in effect cheating the farmers). Market forces are now squeezing enough of them out of business so that, in conjunction with the recent price support legislation passed by Congress, farm prices will be going up---which means even higher prices in the supermarkets.

Look for double-digit inflation before long, double-digit interest rates, and double-digit unemployment rates.

The tax cut now scheduled for Fall will likely be moved up to Spring...and likely be in the 40-50 billion dollar zone.

PREDICTION: Carter will be a one term president.

Has anybody else noticed the nutty logic of the FDA in ordering warning labels on certain hair dyes? The FDA claims the dyes may cause cancer. These coal-tar derivatives have been in use for 30 or so years, and no scalp cancers have ever developed.

Ah, but the National Cancer Institute found that if it FED the rats and mice the chemical---4-methoxy-m-phenylenediamine and its sulphate---cancers could develop in the test animals.

Seems to me a fair test of the chemicals would have been to dye the rats five for six times a day for a year or so. [Maybe they did and nothing happened?] Anyway, the warning reads:

WARNING---CONTAINS AN INGREDIENT THAT CAN PENETRATE YOUR SKIN AND HAS BEEN DETERMINED TO CAUSE CANCER IN LABORATORY ANIMALS.

What would happen, I wonder, if the NCI tried feeding rats soap? Cleansing cream? Sun tan lotions?

1-9-78 Something is going on.... Now, a few days after Carter has returned from his foreign barnstorming trip (A long-time Presidential rule: in trouble politically at home, visit a foreign

'...both left and right understand perfectly the ambiguous language with which, nowadays, the English literary critics cloak descriptions of sin. Thus, they appreciate that "Rabelaisian" means "Filthy". "A sensitive and tender story of young love" - "Filthy". "A vivid social document" - "Really Filthy". "A book I finally warmed to" - "The filthy bits are at the end". "A book I could not finish" - "The filthy bits are at the beginning". "An erotic masterpiece" - "Nineteenth Century sadism". But whereas the English prefer not to buy a book which is described straightforwardly as wicked, they prefer to go to films that are. So we get "They were like two primitive beasts clawing each other with naked passion" to describe BORN FREE. "A side of London's teenage vice that will shock you" for OLIVER TWIST. And "Trapped in the bed of a beast" for GOLDDLOCKS...'

'On the whole, though, apart from the fundamental sins connected with money and class, there is little that the English consider downright immoral. There is, of course, the occasional eccentric like the woman giving evidence at Ilford County Court who said she objected to seeing men's pajamas hanging on a clothesline "in an indiscreet way"...and the headmistress of a senior girls' school who beseeches her pupils not to wear patent leather shoes "else men will see your underwear reflected in them"...most of the English rather like sin, so long as they only see it sidelong.

'In general they take their lead from the Reverend Cyril Downes. When Mr. Downes, a Methodist Minister, heard that some Sheffield students were putting on a production of Oscar Wilde's SALOME he went along and had a heart to heart talk with them. The result was that when the leading lady in the words of the DAILY MAIL "peeled off the last of her seven veils, she stood revealed in a flared skirt and tunic blouse. With sleeves" As de Madariaga said, "The Anglo-Saxon conscience does not prevent the Anglo-Saxon from sinning. It merely prevents him from enjoying it.'

"The English Way of Life"
pp 178/9
TO ENGLAND WITH LOVE
by David Frost and Anthony Jay (1967)

country and Be Presidential. When in a lot of trouble, visit a lot of countries. When all else fails---start a war.), Energy Secretary Schlesinger is now off to Saudi Arabia and Morocco for a week of energy discussions. [Morocco??]

Carter, it is revealed, promised Iran, Saudi Arabia and France that if Congress doesn't do something soon to make gas and oil more expensive in this country (to cut imports of oil, to buttress the value of the US\$ in foreign exchange markets), then he (Carter) will impose stiff import fees, thereby imposing an across the board cost increase on each barrel of imported gasoline, oil and perhaps liquified natural gas.

The pressure is on the joint Senate-House conferees on the Energy Bill to make some hard decisions and compromises....likely a formula on natural gas that involves guaranteed yearly price increases plus increases to compensate for inflation! This kind of compromise is precisely what the multinational oil-gas companies want! Their lip-service pleas for decontrol of all prices is just so much smokescreen. They don't want a free market! They don't want competition! They want increased government control of their prices because with this new energy bill they control the controllers.

Senator Ted Kennedy went to China recently and sounded out the Chinese on letting the multinational oil companies come in and "help" the Chinese develop their oil resources (which the CIA satellite photos probably show are considerable). But the Chinese leadership wants no "joint" deals. They fought long and hard to get out from under foreign thumbs, quasi-colony status, etc., and aren't about to buy that package again.

But the fact that Teddy is apparently back in the good graces of the powers-that-be suggests that he is now acceptable as a President. And I suggest that unless Carter does a much better job, the next Democratic nominee for President may be Ted Kennedy. (I keep having the feeling that Carter is a patsy--a set up who was put into office to do the nasty things that must be done, like presiding over the start of a depression, and who is expendable. Of course when Carter realizes the true state of affairs he will be a broken man. But so were Johnson and Nixon, when they were forced to resign. [John Kennedy got too uppity and had to be assassinated. J.] He'll have to find someone

in his big pension and whatever honors are bestowed on him after he's out.)

1-12-78 The obscene eagerness of Carter and his advisors to claim credit for the drop in unemployment (ending Dec. 18, when they stop collecting raw data for that "month") is disgusting. The Labor Dept. doesn't count people on strike (coal) or those laid off less than two weeks (results of coal strike) but do count those working (for a short period of time) during the Christmas rush. Thus the employment/unemployment figures are distorted and subject to further distortion by the usual 'seasonal adjustment' tinkering.

It should be noted that Carter did not schedule a press conference to glee about the .7% increase in the Wholesale Price Index which will result in another big increase in the Consumer Price Index in a few weeks.... Nor is he taking credit/blame for the devaluation of the dollar (a calculated, deliberate move) which will result in even greater inflation rates later on in 1978 as increased dollar costs of foreign goods and supplies are passed on to the consumer in ever-higher prices.

To compensate for this devaluation and compensate for the higher taxes imposed by social security deductions, Carter wants to lower federal taxes by 40 billion....and by necessity force a raise in the federal deficit to around 100 billion for 1979, which insures further inflation....

Sooner or later the American people are going to tumble to this game and face a real choice---go along with this erosion of savings and values and freedoms (more and more and more people on the federal dole---in the slave position) or choose to radically change the Federal Reserve system of fractional reserve banking which is nothing less than an engine for inflation....and also take a terrible depression. But, of course, a terrible depression is in the works anyway, but the govt. will "take over" and regiment the country during the "crisis". It'll take time---years---as more and more controls and restrictions of freedom are unfortunately required to "get the country moving again." Relax, children, the government will take care of you. Suck on your sugar tit and just do as you are told. [That's what you really, secretly want, isn't it--a Big smiling Daddy and Mommy, and no responsibility.]

WANTING FREE OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL IS ANTISOCIAL.

CONTROL IS SAFE
DECONTROL IS DANGEROUS
FREEDOM IS DANGEROUS
A COOPERATIVE CITIZEN IS A GOOD CITIZEN

1-14-78 Yes, indeed. Now Sen. Byrd of West Virginia, the Senate Majority Leader, has "surfaced" as a supporter of the Panama Canal Treaties provided certain assurances in re the defense and privileged wartime use by the U.S.A. are written in and signed by Carter and Torrijos.

This is the line taken by Sen. Baker, the Minority Leader.

The orchestration is lovely to watch. The simultaneous release of a new Associated Press-NBC News poll that says most Americans support the new Treaties provided the above-mentioned assurances are formalized adds another "clinching" bit of pressure/evidence which will further assure the Senate ratification wanted by the administration and the megabanks who have such a large stake in Panama taking over the Canal Zone lands and taking over the Canal receipts.

Hubert Humphrey is dead at age 66, of cancer. He tried hard to be President, but didn't make it. Mostly because he was not a member of the Council On Foreign Relations as Nixon was, and thus was not "in" with the people who control this country.

1-16-78 It has been reported that Energy Czar Schlesinger, conferring with the Saudi Arabian oil leaders, has two main proposals concerning crude oil prices and U.S. purchases of oil:

He wants the crude oil price frozen til 1980 and adjusted after that to world inflation and the value of the dollar.

This will happen anyway.

The other proposal is that the U.S. would buy 2.5 million barrels of oil daily for three years with payments made in U.S. Treasury bonds, and sell them 60 F15 jets if they accept the deals.

By my arithmetic this comes to about 35 billion dollars in Fed bonds the arabs would be holding. At about 8% interest....we would be paying them about 2.8 billion dollars per year.

For this debt just to avoid hard choices and admitting the bankruptcy of basic policy and basic courage. As ever.

The Saudi's would be fools to go along with deals like this, unless they want so much leverage on our foreign policy that they could almost dictate what we do in the Middle East. (Think what they could do---cash in 35 billions in bonds plus the 40 billion in Fed bonds and notes they already hold and bankrupt us blatantly and inescapably---for all the citizens to see.) But of course this country is already bankrupt; what is going on now is simply desperate, increasingly frantic moves and doges to postpone the evil days of paying the piper. But every move now has an evil consequence. So soon scapegoats will be sought, and lame excuses made.

For as long as is possible, though, the government will continue to inflate the currency (devalue the currency) and will continue to rip-off foreign governments left and right.

'THE FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT IS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT EACH CITIZEN IS HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF EVERY OTHER CITIZEN, AND UNACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS OWN.

---John Kreuttnur

Thanks to Karl T. Pflock

1-22-78 Well, let's see what the world has been up to while I took care of the mailing of SFR 23.

Sadat of Egypt has called off the peace talks with Israel since he discovered that he couldn't on anybody into forgetting that Israel won the war they last fought.

Now he wants "world opinion" to force concessions from Israel. Ho ho. And he wants the U.S. to give Egypt the same equipment we sell to Israel.

The Israelis aren't under any pressure to give up anything. They hold the lands they fought for, and only by getting what they want and need in exchange will they give them up.



We are going to force them to do otherwise? Egypt is saddled with junky, deteriorating Russian equipment, Jordan has no appreciable arms or army anymore, Lebanon is a shambles from civil war, and Syria is committed to keeping a shaky peace in Lebanon.

Israel's enemies are divided and weak.

All Egypt has a right to do is settle its Sinai issue with Israel and cut back its military outlays to a minimum. With the billion-dollar subsidies it gets from Saudi Arabia and the U.S., Egypt might be able to make some progress in social and economic problems pressing in on it.

Instead, Sadat makes big threats and big promises. He's either a pretentious fool or playing a consciously losing game with ulterior motives...like keeping in office.

President Carter is being tarred and feathered by playing politics with the Justice Dept.'s Philadelphia prosecutor, Mr. Marston, a man who has been going after Democrat politicians in Pennsylvania.

Now Carter is smeared with the "corruption-as-usual" brush he tsk-tsked about during his campaign. In fact, Wm. Safire, a heavy-weight columnist of the establishment, made a good case that Carter in legal fact was guilty of obstructing justice in seeming to hasten Marston's firing as a result of a call from one of the being-investigated Demo politicians. Richard Nixon will be bitter if Carter is not forced to resign.

The Carter tax plan is another soak-the-middle-class plan, and not much of a give-it-to-the-poor plan, either. These days a 25 billion tax cut is only barely enough to offset Social Security tax increases, property tax increases, and cost-of-living increases... caused by government engineered inflation.

The game is to keep the "recovery" going by resorting to ever-greater govt. debt, ever-greater devaluation of the dollar, and ever-greater encouragement of ever-deeper private and state and corporate debt.

This will result in ever-greater misdirection of funds, ever-higher official "inflation" [cost-of-living increases].

Foreigners have until recently kept the inflation rate fairly low by buying a lot of U.S. debt, thereby relieving the Federal Reserve of having to finance debt through U.S. channels, which means through the banks mostly. But more and more the devaluations have taught the foreigners to distrust the U.S.

govt. and the value of the dollar, so all that new debt has to be turned into spendable money here and will send a cheap thrill through the economy for a while, will up interest rates, and will send the inflation rate into double digits.

It's a spending game the govt. has not dared stop, for fear of triggering a depression.

SO: This year I predict the stock market will drop to the 650 level---or lower---and inflation will hit 10% or more, and people will spend and spend and spend---like the Germans in the 20's, because saving money is only a guaranteed way to lose money. The housing construction market will collapse. And if Carter gets his fuel taxes passed, a further tax cut will be necessary [so people will be able to afford the higher-priced gas and oil the taxes are supposed to conserve---understand?].

In his State of the Union speech the President said he was going to

ONCE THE MILLENNIUM HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA IS WHAT WILL KEEP US THERE.



try for "volunteer" restrictions of wage and price increases by business and labor. He said he didn't like wage and price controls.

But just saying he didn't want or like controls implied he would go to them if forced to by an inflation rate caused [his definition!] by "unconscionable" wage-price increases.

I just sat and blinked and wondered how he could mouth such bullshit with a straight face.

Anyway, the threat is there---the people must restrict their "greed" or the government will do it for them.

I understand the govt. is also now considering gas rationing. All those gas ration coupons are lying in warehouses, and what a shame not to use them.

'PSYCHOTHERAPY, LIKE ALL MOVEMENTS IN THEIR LAST DAYS, HAS BECOME DEGENERATE. ... WHAT WAS ONCE A GROUP OF TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGING MAN'S CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE HAS BECOME A NEW SET OF SHOULDERS, GROUP INVASIONS OF THE PRIVATE SOUL, RIGHTEOUS RITUAL, PERSONAL CHARISMA, FAD, THE RIGIDITY OF INSTITUTIONS, AND THE GROWING DESPERATION OF CUSTOMERS WHO WERE PROMISED TOO MUCH. ... I CAN'T PROMISE WHAT I CAN'T DELIVER. I TRIED FOR OVER FIFTEEN THOUSAND OFFICE HOURS. I'M NOT SO SURE NOW THAT IT DOESN'T MAKE AS MUCH TROUBLE AS IT UNDOES.

---COMING OF [MIDDLE] AGE---
A Journey, by Arnold J. Mandell, M.D.

1-26-78 Story in the paper today about a New York judge who dismissed a charge of prostitution against a 14-year-old girl on the grounds that sex-for-pay is actually recreation and that anti-prostitution laws are probably severely unconstitutional.

Of course the religionists, the professional moralists and the social workers [whose jobs are linked to the continuation of prostitution laws and protecting children] are up in arms.

I wonder if she [the judge] will be recalled or fired?

Aren't the implications of our government's actions lately reassuring? One of the Russian satellites with a nuclear power plant attached, got into a disintegrating orbit and came down in northern Canada. Our government tracks all these sky objects and knew it was coming down a week before it entered the atmosphere---but wasn't sure exactly where. So nothing was said except to a few other governments.

The world was lucky---this time. No harm done. But there are other Russian satellites up there, of the same type, and sooner or later another one will do a 'shooting star' routine ...and hit...where?

In order to prevent panic and scare mongering, the governments involved this time didn't say boo about the potentially lethal danger to human life. I presume they crossed their fingers and prayed a lot.

This is a new, world-wide game of Russian Roulette---and we are unwilling participants. Next time our government can not be trusted to tell us if we are in danger! It just wouldn't do to have the population of a three state area, say, start to move. Quickly. All at once.

Traffic jams you wouldn't believe, panic at airports, looting, deaths...

Would you sue the government for alerting the populace in such an emergency---or for NOT alerting people?

I would say a high priority item in the military budget should be a reliable, widely deployed anti-missile/satellite missile, so that in the future if a spy or other type satellite starts wandering downward it would be possible to 'kill' it in time.

Until then, we all sitting ducks, and it is not comforting to know our government will not tell us ahead of time if danger is coming.

2-6-78 Wither the economy now? We have conflicting evidence---as usual. New car sales are down consistently for two months. But new orders to manufacturers rose again. Unemployment in January declined, surprising a lot of people. The stock market has plunged. New loans at NY banks have declined. Exports are up a bit.

THE UNDERLYING FACT OF LIFE MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE: You are now not earning a dime on your savings.

If you have \$1,000. in a savings account at 6-1/2% interest rate, and the inflation rate is 6-1/2% per year, you are only breaking even. You have lent the bank or the savings and loan co. your money for a year and not been paid a dime for the use of it.

And if you spent the interest, you lost that much value from your \$1,000.

In fact, you may have lost money even if you let the interest payment stay in the account---because that interest-earned is taxable income!

NOW DO YOU SEE WHY GOVERNMENTS LOVE INFLATING THE MONEY SUPPLY SO MUCH? They can rip you off every way from Sunday---and you probably won't even realize it.

And now you know why charge accounts are so easy to get---12% and 18% interest charges. The banks love them! Credit/debt for the consumer is a rip-off.

Realistically, banks and savings companies should pay the inflation rate plus 3% for the use of your money. But federal law prohibits them paying more than 7.75% on a six-year certificate.

Our wonderful government is unwilling to face the true consequences of its deficits. It would rather bleed small savers white over

the years, and pretend it is doing us all a favor by keeping interest rates low. Ho-ho.

If you put \$2000. in the bank instead of buying a car, and spent the interest paid on the two grand (ten years ago), today that same car would cost you \$4000. The purchasing power of your money was neatly, unobtrusively, diminished by 100%. (Because it now takes 100% more money to buy that car.)

Remember, a few years ago, when I predicted it would take 50 billion dollar deficits to stimulate the economy out of the next recession? It happened.

Now watch, in 1979-80-81, as it takes 100+ billion deficits to 'get the economy moving again.'

Of course sooner or later, when inflation hits 10% or more, most people stop saving/losing money, and spend their incomes as fast as they get them. This is in the classic inflation scenario when it reaches the 'runaway' or hyper phase of the cycle.

Right now more and more people are hip and bidding up land prices. It also explains why people are putting money into collectibles---books, antiques, magazines...anything! Anything but save it!



2-8-78 I'm really amused by Sadat, of Egypt, as he postures in this country, acting and talking like a head of state with a credible power base, a credible army, a credible treasury. He is a beggar, dependent on our loans, loans from Saudi Arabia and the International Monetary Fund for money to keep his destitute country functioning. He pretends to want to negotiate a peace for the Palestinians, for Jordan, for Syria, for Lebanon.... The Israelis are not fooled for an instant. They will make a separate peace with him concerning the Sinai, and that's about it.

Interesting items in SCIENCE NEWS this week:

+ Recent tests and statistical work shows that social status, or class, doesn't correlate with I.Q. scores, for kids. What counts is not how much your dad makes or where you live, but the quality and quantity of emotional support and mental stimulation you receive in your home environment as a pre-school child.

The excuses for massive social engineering are undermined again. H.E.W. please note. [They'll ignore this Univ. of Ark and Univ. of Mo study, of course.]

+ Israel doctors have found that something in a primary tumor in the body inhibits secondary tumors. If a primary tumor is cut out in surgery, the undetected secondary tumors grow wildly and further surgery is useless.

This would indicate that if you find yourself with a fairly well advanced primary malignant tumor, you might be better off with other kinds of therapy than surgery.

+ Recent biochemical analysis shows that paranoid schizophrenia may be an entirely different disease than ordinary schizophrenia.

'What have I been telling you, Geis!'

Quiet, Alter! You're nothing but the result of an underactive enzyme---monoamine oxidase.

+Females from age 19-45 have quite active sexual fantasies, of a wide variety (up to 16 kinds). Sexual fantasy in women increases from late teens to mid-twenties, levels off until the mid-thirties, then drops off sharply by the mid-forties.

"The woman who is older, sexually experienced, more anxious, more independent and holds more liberal views toward women's roles will tend to have more sexual fantasies than the woman who is younger, a virgin, less anxious, more passive and holds more traditional attitudes."

2-9-78 One way of looking at the virtual deadlock over deregulating natural gas prices in the House-Senate conference on the Carter Energy Bill is to adopt Carl Oglesby's theory of a YANKEE AND COWBOY WAR. He sees the Yankees (Eastern, old-time Big Money, who control the administration and part of Congress) and the Cowboys (South and Western new-money, growing power, who control a large block of the Congress).

The power surge of the new South and West (so the theory goes) resulted in a Cowboy coup in 1963 with the assassination of Kennedy and the installation of Johnson as a cowboy-controlled President.

The Yankees fretted and (so the theory goes) mounted a counter-coup with Watergate and putting in Carter.

But Johnson kept on virtually all of the Yankee cabinet and advisors, and Nixon and Ford were both certified Yankee/Rockefeller men. So I rather doubt this Yankee-Cowboy war of coup and counter-coup scenario. And, too, "Yankee" oil money is very deep into the ownership of South and West oil and gas and coal and defense industry.

No...I think the real battles are in the international sphere, but even there I am sure the protagonists are themselves in rather desperate straits, having engineered and watched helplessly occur a terrible international inflation/debt crisis which the OPEC oil price rise only made tremendously worse.

[Incidentally, the major OPEC countries realized soon after their quadrupling of the price of oil that it was Too Much; they have let the users devalue currencies enough to roll back the price about 20% since 1974. But I suspect they will soon begin raising the price to match the continuing devaluations. That will bring a crunch as governments realize the real cost of oil will stay the same. And as business realizes it, too.]

2-10-78 There have been some astonishing decisions by judges lately. The latest is by an appeals court [I think in California] involving the prosecution of a 26-year-old woman for having consensual intercourse with a 15-year-old boy.

The court dismissed the case against the woman, saying that no harm had been done, it was a matter of sex education for the boy, and that this experience would help him mature and be a better father and husband in later years.

Probably true.

But would the court have felt the same way about consensual intercourse between a 26-year-old man and a 15-year-old girl? Would the same rationale apply? Why not?

Will the feminists have an opinion on this? Will teen-age girls of advanced feminist convictions begin looking for older men as "instructors" and "maturing experiences"? Will finishing schools for girls now include loss of virginity and sexual technique in their electives?

It occurs to me that if NASA can't get a robot booster rocket up and attached to Skylab before that 100-ton space workshop reenters the atmosphere sometime in 1979 or 80, the entire U.S. space program may be dealt a crippling blow.

Skylab could come down and kill some people, and the U.S. government could be liable for millions or billions of dollars in damages.

We will, of course, have to wait and see what happens. But the idea of irrational, random death sitting up in the skies, dropping down every now and again in a planet-wide game of involuntary russian roulette, is not going to sit well with the citizenry.

Hey, maybe I could get rich selling backyard satellite shelters!

SHORT NOTES: Two recent marijuana studies--one at Harvard and one at the Univ. of Kansas and Washington University in St. Louis---found no brain damage or shrinkage (contrary to British reports several years ago) among heavy marijuana smokers. The men in both studies were examined with computerized brain scans.

Two aspirin a day helps prevent strokes. A study in Canada (echoing U.S. studies) shows that aspirin therapy reduces death and disability from stroke in patients with previous mild strokes to about half the expected level.

I suppose it might make sense among the 50-60-70 year olds to practice some preventive medicine by taking 2 aspirin every night before going to bed.

Didn't I read a while back that aspirin was also good in helping prevent heart attacks?

Aha! So that's why women live so much longer than men! From a lifetime of "Not tonight, Henry, I have a headache" (and taking aspirin to prove it) they have unwittingly prolonged their lives!

Junk foods (stuff high in salt and sugar) causes high blood pressure when fed to Spider monkeys, says Gerald S. Berenson of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine. The soda pop-hamburger-potato chip diets caused abnormally high blood pressures over the eight week test.

Note this: sugar and salt in combination had a greater blood-pressure elevating effect in the monkeys than did salt alone.

Considering what most school kids eat nowadays, we may be raising a massive stroke and heart attack series of generations. Now, if the manufacturers and fast-food outlets will only add two aspirin to every Big Mac and Twinkie....

A BIOGRAPHY OF BRAM STOKER by Harry Ludlum (1962) carries a quote from Bela Lugosi from the '30s:

'Ninety-seven percent of my letters come from women, and the rest from scientists and priests. The scientists and priests ask my views about spiritualism, yogi, theosophy, and things like that.

'Women are interested in terror for the sake of terror. For generations they have been the subject sex. This seems to have bred a masochistic interest---an enjoyment of, or at least a keen interest in, suffering experienced vicariously through the screen.'

(Thanks to Ian Covell)

ITS OFFICIAL!
STARTING ON THE
FIRST, YOU ARE DE-
FINED BY YOUR SEXUAL
PREFERENCES AND
NOT BY WHAT YOU READ!

HOW
DULL...

BUT MY SEXUAL
PREFERENCE IS
WHAT I READ!



2-11-78 Fred Meyer Saving & Loan, the creation of Fred Meyer Stores, a string of supermarkets, is offering Visa cards to anyone who is willing to maintain a savings account with them with a balance double that of the credit-allowed on the Visa card. Thus, if you put in \$500, you get a Visa card with a \$250 limit of credit, at 10% interest charges.

And the savings account pays a tremendous 5-1/2% interest.

Good deal, you say?

Well....look at it this way. You are losing at least 1% of the value of your savings account due to inflation, now. Fred Meyer is paying you 5-1/2% to rent your money, then lending half that money back to you at 10% debt charges.

If you use the full \$250. credit of the Visa card you will pay at least \$25.00 a year interest to Fred Meyer...and he will pay you \$22.50 back on the \$500 balance. So good old Freddie has the use of your \$500 for free, and he can invest it at 12-18% elsewhere in consumer loans.

Nice business, huh? But who would be fool enough to buy that Visa package? Thousands! There really are suckers born every minute.

2-15-78 President Carter wants U.S. businesses to switch to coal, in order to cut down on the importation of so much foreign oil.

Previous administrations have pressed business to switch to clean oil and gas from coal to improve environmental quality---clean air, to us:

But the increased use of coal means very expensive machinery to clean the smoke before it gets to the atmosphere. Switching back to coal also means placing larger segments of the economy in the gentle hands of the United Mine Workers and the coal companies (owned largely by the big oil companies).

The President is in a hot spot. Having already alienated large segments of the farming community, he is now liable to piss off everybody else in the midwest and east unless he acts quickly, decisively and fairly.

Grimacing won't be enough.

What the hell is Senator Jackson doing visiting China, now, for a week or so? His absence stalls the House-Senate Energy bill conference until he gets back.

Who is he talking to, and why? What's so important? What's cooking?

With the timely switches of a few influential southern conservative senators from "undecided" to Pro-Panama Treaties positions, the issue is now a fait accompli. The orchestration is almost complete. The ritual has been nearly gone through. The Treaties will be passed with a nice margin. Very adroit performance by our secret rulers.

Treasury Secretary Blumenthal and Arthur Burns came away empty from last week's secret gettogether with the finance ministers of Germany, France and Japan... More and more the confrontation---the naked power plays---between the big money of the U.S. (Rockefeller-Morgan) and the big money of Europe (Rothschilds-?) is escalating to a near war. "Our" side is arguing for a lot more debt/inflation to flog the European's economies into a kind of fevered boom---'one more time' to stave off the threat of Euro-Communism and depression next year. The European money men have had long experience with hyper-inflation and want no part of it. They'll take their chances.

Desperate times is ahead.

AUDIO FORUM sent along their new catalog of cassettes for sale. They feature speeches, lectures, talks, panels by well-known people on conservative politics, economics, art, communism, drugs, education, energy, health, individualism & anarchism, labor, law, libertarian ideology & philosophy, medicare & health legislation, national security, new left & radicalism, news media, nostalgia, objectivism, philosophy, psychology, religious-inspirational, self-improvement, sex education, socialism, tax resistance & government spending, U.S. defense & foreign policy, Vietnam war, women in politics, world war II, and the Nixon years.

Address: 901 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Send a quarter and tell them SFR/Geis sent you.

2-20-78 Interesting pressure device being used to make the coal miner's contract negotiations come out with a settlement: Carter is (apparently) going to ask Congress to pass a law allowing the federal government to seize the mines and negotiate a contract with the United Mine Workers which will satisfy the workers.

The workers would then, we assume, go back to work... And? The government then turns the mines back to the owners, having saddled the owners with a contract THEY don't like?

Will the government offer to compensate the owners for the extra costs of the contract negotiated by the government?

Will this be a pattern for all big-union strikes---steel workers, railroad workers, airline workers, longshoremen, postal workers....

Will the vital unions be told that if they hold out long enough they can force the government to step in and give them what they want?

No wonder George Meany, head of the AFL-CIO likes the idea of government takeover and government negotiated contracts.

I suspect these thoughts will occur to others, and that Congress will think long and hard about passing a law making the above "solution" possible.

And what do you think will happen to the stock market? Mining company shares, for a starter, would plummet..

As we become, as a nation, as a world, ever more interlocked, ever more interdependent, we become ever more vulnerable to union/management extortion. There are great advantages to mass specializations, and mass interdependence, but there are obviously great drawbacks and problems.

When your food, your shelter, your power and your safety depends on other people upon whom you have no influence or control...how free are you?

Excuse me now, I've got to load the shotgun, dig a well, and plant a crop. Thinking of rigging up the bicycle to an electric generator. I wonder how hard I'd have to pedal to watch JOHNNY CARSON? [Hey, I could rest during the commercials!]

2-26-78 You remember a week or so ago when I noted that Senator Jackson had gone to China, and wondered what was cooking?

Well, he came back dutifully



mouth the New China Line: They have a lot of oil and need help to develop the fields, we ought to establish full diplomatic relations with China (and withdraw full recognition from Taiwan).

Note that David Rockefeller also made an extensive visit to China a few months ago. This change of tune and policy has come since the "radical" "gang of four" were overthrown and a more moderate, cooperative, outward-looking faction has taken over.

Ahh, Sadat, of Egypt. Angry that a faction of the Palestinians had murdered his editor friend and taken hostages and hi-jacked a jet to the airport of Cyprus, and wanting to show the world that Egypt could be as daring and efficient as Israel, and needing to buttress his sagging personal prestige....Sadat ordered a commando-type raid to the airport to save the hostages and either kill or capture the two terrorists.

Alas...15 of his crack troops were killed, 16 wounded, 40 captured, the expensive Hercules transport blown up, the three crewmen killed.

A total disaster. Humiliation. Abject failure.

But he carried on as if it was a success, and the survivors were treated as heroes.

I don't think Sadat will be head of state of Egypt very much longer. He has come up empty too often, too publicly, and in the Arab world he is a pathetic fool.

'ANY INDIVIDUAL IN THE GENERAL MARKET CAN GIVE TO THE POOR, PAY FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S SCHOOLING, DONATE MONEY TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, OR HIRE PROTECTION. IT ISN'T HIS CHOICE HE'S CONCERNED ABOUT WHEN HE WANTS THE GOVERNMENT TO DO THOSE THINGS. IT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S CHOICE THAT HE'S TRYING TO OVERRULE.'

'ALL GOVERNMENT ACTION DEPEND UPON ONE-SIDED TRANSACTIONS, IN WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL IS FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN PAYING FOR WHAT HE DOESN'T WANT AND GOING TO JAIL. THESE PRINCIPLES APPLY TO ANY GOVERNMENT---FROM THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. GOVERNMENTS DON'T RULE; THEY OVERRULE.'

---HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN
AN UNFREE WORLD
By Harry Browne

ness who plays Zeb and upon which the series depends for whatever vitality and aura of authenticity it has...and that isn't much. This episodic multiple point-of-view series, this Western set approx. 1870s, is dull when Arness is not on screen as various miscast young actors and actresses work out 1970s problems and as the producers dare not present any hint of the real social/cultural life of the 1870s for fear of offending Liberals and Feminists today.

Violence is another no-no. Especially realistic, historically accurate violence. As when Zeb approaches two baddies, has a confrontation with them, and shoots one while gutting another with a knife. A prudent, battle-scarred mountain man and frontiersman such as Zeb would first make damned sure those two men (who died so easily and silently) were actually dead. And if not dead would have disarmed them & tied them up. [Leave aside the mercy killing of a badly wounded man to save suffering.] Then he would have investigated the moaning bundle that had attracted his attention and brought about the fight.

So HOW THE WEST WAS WON will probably not be back next season, unless it centers on Zeb and eschews Feminism and Real Nice Villains such as played by Richard Baseheart in this episode, who would not have lasted two days in 1878 making the decisions he makes in this story. His own men would have shot him out of hand for a dangerous fool.

MOVIES SEEN RECENTLY: SHAMPOO is a Warren Beatty produced movie which too often repeats his audience-engaging habit of mused, throw-away, difficult to hear/understand dialog (as in MCCABE AND MRS. MILLER). Interesting, well-paced, shallow, funny, pretentious; noteworthy for its realistic language and bits of business in a ridiculous plot.

TAXI DRIVER would not have made the splash it did were it not for the riveting shoot-out (and mockery of "justice" ending). Under all that degradation-mood and disturbed-young-man-of-our-times facade there is The Guns and The Bloody Killing to draw crowds. Thus everybody gets his munchies---every body is touched. In fact, the intellectuals get fed twice---they can play Interpretation and Understanding games with their heads while their guts get the gutter language, the perversions and the killing and the loving use of guns. I dug it on both levels---and willingly admit it.

LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR is another intellectual and death feast. I have read that Dian Keaton's performance will earn her at least an Oscar Nomination. Trouble is, I've seen her on the JOHNNY CARSON SHOW and her mannerisms, style, mildly neurotic manner are so like the character she plays in GOODBAR that I don't think she did much actual acting in the film---just let her personality do the job of giving flesh and bone to the part. In other words, the producers deserve great credit for correct casting. The extended rape-murder at the end was brutal to watch. I couldn't endure it again.

THE BILLION DOLLAR HOBO is a ninety-minute pile of patronizing, dumb, cliched, unfunny misuse of Tim Conway. It was aimed at low-grade morons and kids under ten. It missed.

The Creditors Are Getting Restless.... Strange little news bits often get past the screens, especially on small all-news radio stations in the hinterlands which often read everything on the AP, UPI, and Reuters, and INS tickers. For instance, yesterday as I was pasting up a few pages of "OtherVoices" I was idly listening to this local all-news channel (KYXI). And the newscaster read a short piece about David Rockefeller in one of the OPEC nations. He is visiting the arabs and in response to a suggestion that the OPEC might shift out of dollar-denominated payments for oil because the dollar was being devalued so badly in the foreign exchange markets, he is reported to have said such a move would be unwise because the U.S. would then have to retaliate in some way.

You'd think this story worthy of an inch or two in the WALL STREET JOURNAL, wouldn't you? Nope. Not there this morning. Not in THE OREGONIAN either, of course.

You really can't blame people for wanting to protect the purchasing power of their money...by trading it for some kind of currency that retains its value.

Carter today, in his news conference, said (as politicians always do) that the sinking dollar overseas (and here, too) is due to "speculators" who misread the true state of our economy. Sure. The multinationals, the big banks, the finance ministers of other countries---they are all speculators, all stupid.

I see by the front-page graph in the March 1, 1978 WALL STREET JOURNAL that the average yield on

3-2-78 I watched an episode of HOW THE WEST WAS WON the other day, and feel sorry for ~~that~~ William James Ar-

The 30 stocks in the Dow Jones industrial average is now up to nearly 6%. Wow. With inflation now running at 9.6% an investor is only losing about 3.7% on his money, not counting the taxes on the 6%. And people wonder why the stock market is still sinking. It'll sink until a stock earns enough to compensate for the going inflation rate plus a couple % for real profit. Taxes will have to go down and/or inflation will have to vanish for the stock market to turn around. Short of that unlikely scenario, I can't see stocks stopping their slide short of maybe 500 on the Dow.

But back to that Rockefeller story---and the steady, at times sickening drop of the dollar in value (which means very heavy inflation---foreigners are refusing to sop up our deficits and may begin insisting on gold or other currencies in payments, soon---which means our deficits will stay at home, cost more, and drive up costs/prices): something big is cooking in the international financial arena. A crisis is developing. Carter may be told/required to declare a National Emergency and impose a tax on imported oil (a heavy one) or begin rationing gas, or...?

[And if the coal pact is not accepted by the miners...ho-ha!!]

But never fear, whatever he has to do, he'll blame it on somebodies other than the government.

3-7-78 President Carter is either a fool or a weakling or a blatant tool of those who put him in office---and I don't hate the people who voted for him.

He has again misread the coal miners. He thought they'd accept the new contract he coerced from the coal companies, and was fooled badly. Now he is invoking the Taft Hartley Act (80-day cooling off period) in the face of all kinds of reports that the miners will not obey a court order to go back to work. He has, it is reported from the White House, no plans to ask Congress to seize the mines.

[It's okay to seize the miners, however, in a legal way. For my money, if forced labor is ordered, then an even-handed forced seizure of the owners' assets is proper.]

So a scene is to be played out: the injunction called for by the act will be granted by a tame federal judge, hopes will be expressed that the miners will 'obey the law of the land', and the miners will not work. Very little coal will be dug.

THEN what will Carter do? Ask at last for seizure of the mines? Put renewed pressure on the owners for a contract the rank and file will accept? But weeks will have been lost, with spreading layoffs and power cutbacks becoming more severe (unless we're being lied to on a monumental scale).

Prompting these questions:
1. Do the people behind Carter want to break the union?
2. Do they want spreading layoffs and power shortages and a "bad press" for the union in order to prepare and lure the public to eventual massive government controls of wages, prices, and workers in the future? [There are more industry-wide strikes possible this year, a lulu in the railroads, for instance.]

He's screwing up, and after this coal fiasco talk will surface about him not running for a second term.

3-11-78 I have to lock up this column now. The issue is already suited to the drawstrings.

Tell you what. I'm not really comfortable with this amount of current-event commentary in SFR. Better that the space be used for more reviews, more letters, more sf and fantasy commentary.

So it has been decided in the echoing halls of the medulla, that I split off this column from SFR and offer it to the readers as a separate, more frequent subscription magazine.

It will be titled RICHARD E. GEIS, it will be offset, with pages this size, this amount of print reduction, typed on this Selectric using these typefaces.

It will be 10 pages, mailed 1st class.

It will feature at least one Gilliland cartoon per issue. It will be published whenever ten pages are completed, in this diary format.

60¢ per issue. Subscriptions: 5 for \$3., 10 for \$6., 15 for \$9.

If you like the idea, you'll have found a subscription form in this issue if you're a subscriber. Bookstore buyers please send \$3 or \$6 and your printed name and address with something like, 'SEND REG.'

The first issue of RICHARD E. GEIS will be published and available June 15th.

[I've used this title before several times. It's convenient and pleasantly egotistical. This will be a new series, with numbering

starting with #1. No copies of previous REGs are available.]

Is REG worth the money and the reading? Think a moment about what has happened in the past two months [from March 11 to May 11] and consider what I have said in these pages. If I've read the trends and the underlying realities correctly, you'll probably think I'm worth listening to and taking seriously. If events have shown me to be a wrong-headed paranoiac, then you will not want to subscribe. Fair enough.

RICHARD E. GEIS
P.O. Box 11408
Portland, OR 97211

'IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN IN THE FRONT LINE OF THOSE PUSHING RATIFICATION OF THE TREATIES. U.S. DIRECT INVESTMENT IN PANAMA ALONE IS NEARLY 1.6 BILLION, EXCEEDING THAT OF ITS STAKE IN PERU, ARGENTINA, OR COLUMBIA. PANAMA'S CONVENIENT BANKING AND SHIPPING LAWS MAKE IT A MOST HOSPITABLE FRIEND OF THE MULTINATIONALS. NO WONDER THAT SOME TWO DOZEN OF THESE MULTATIONALS FORMED THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE FOR A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY WITH A HALF MILLION DOLLAR BUDGET FOR LOBBYING AND PROPAGANDA. THEIR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY THE U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS, A WELL-HEELED ASSOCIATION COMPOSED OF EVERY MAJOR U.S. FIRM DOING BUSINESS IN LATIN AMERICA. AMONG THOSE IN THE FOREFRONT OF LOBBYING FOR THE TREATIES ARE SUCH GIANTS AS BRANIFF, GULF OIL, ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL, PAN AM, AND THE MAJOR U.S. BANKS OPERATING IN PANAMA---CHASE MANHATTAN, CITIBANK, BANK OF AMERICA, AND MARINE MIDLAND. AMONG THE DIRECTORS OF MARINE MIDLAND (UNTIL HE RECENTLY RESIGNED UNDER CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST CHARGES) WAS CANAL NEGOTIATOR SOL LINOWITZ, WHOM CARTER MET AT THE TRILATERAL COMMISSION---AN ORGANIZATION, ONE CANNOT RESIST POINTING OUT, ESTABLISHED BY DAVID ROCKEFELLER OF CHASE MANHATTAN.

'GIVEN WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR U.S. BANKS---THE CARTE BLANCHE BANKING LAWS THEY ENJOY IN PANAMA AND THEIR 1.8 BILLION IN CLAIMS AGAINST THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT---THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE TREATIES IS HARDLY REMARKABLE. THE \$30-ODD MILLION ANNUALLY THAT THE U.S. HAS PLEDGED TO PANAMA---PRESUMABLY TO COME FROM CANAL TOLLS---WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD PAYING THE INTEREST AND AMORTIZING THE PRINCIPAL ON THE LOANS OUTSTANDING TO THE TORRIJOS REGIME.'

---Ronald Steel
THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF
Books, March 23, 1978.

OTHER VOICES, OTHER VOICES, OTHER VOICES, OTHER

LARRY NIVEN REVIEWS.....

Harper and Row have sent me bound page proofs of *SOMERSET DREAMS*, a collection of short stories by Kate Wilhelm. The stories are all around 12,000 words + 3,000, and feature concise, highly polished prose and careful attention to mood and character development. I don't exactly propose to review the book, but two stories attract my attention: *THE ENCOUNTER* and *THE HOUNDS*.

(*SOMERSET DREAMS*, by Kate Wilhelm. Spring '78. \$8.95, Harper & Row.)

I hadn't seen *THE HOUNDS* before. I've never read any Jung. But I believe that *THE HOUNDS* deals with Jungian archetypes. Stand by; my reasons are good.

I remember *THE ENCOUNTER* from nine years ago.

Damon and Kate Wilhelm Knight hosted a writers' conference in Madiera Beach, Florida, in June of 1969. In June Madiera Beach was hard on the nerves. The heat and humidity were murderous; the flies and mosquitos were everywhere; the ocean was at body heat, and dirty. One afternoon Damon aborted an incipient quarrel by suddenly crying, "How many of you feel paranoid? Raise your hands!" A lot of hands went up, including mine.

What we do at these events is submit story manuscripts for criticism, then criticize them in round-table format, with intent to improve the story. The author has no chance to reply until the comments have passed fully around the circle. (Nine years. Should I still be saying We?) I made good use of the suggestions I got for *FOR A POGGY NIGHT*, improving it markedly. And Kate submitted *THE ENCOUNTER*.

The tale tells of a man who finds himself locked in a bus station with a woman during a blizzard. She disturbs him badly. While the snow climbs higher outside and the cold deepens inside, the woman demonstrates just how badly the man has screwed up his life. By morning the man has vanished, and the woman is behaving as if he never existed. Kate was told that the story didn't make sense.

When her turn came, Kate explained that she had drawn her archetypes from Jung rather than



Freud: a thing few writers have tried. The woman was the male character's *anima*; the blizzard was an archetypal symbol too. She was told the story still didn't make sense.

Damon explained to us that we were not qualified to judge this story anyway. Not only had most of us not read Jung, we hailed mostly from the science fiction field, and had not been exposed to the openness and variety of mainstream writing; our minds were closed to new styles. (But why was the story submitted to us if we were not qualified to judge it? It didn't make sense.) ...and we all calmed down, and when I went home I took some good memories with me. Keith Laumer had taken a couple of us to a remarkable restaurant. The evenings were pleasant and fannish. Betty Ballantine had appeared, and I had lectured her enthusiastically on a new invention into Ringworld processes: the "Eye Storm".

And that was that, for nine years. Now back to *SOMERSET DREAMS*.

####

THE HOUNDS describes a family's move to a small farm. Martin, the husband, sometimes wonders if he and his wife shouldn't fight occasionally. Rose Ellen, the protagonist, is sure he's wrong. She grew up in a fighting family. She always gives in...and he always makes up his mind before discussing anything anyway. So now she's a farm wife., with no real choice.

Shortly after the move, Rose

Ellen is adopted by a pair of very beautiful purebred hunting dogs. Nobody claims them. They won't go away. Rose Ellen has strange dreams in which she hunts with dogs. She and her husband have an honest-to-God quarrel. Presently she shoots the dogs.

Now, I know that these dogs are a Jungian archetype. How? Because the story doesn't make sense. After the sense of being cheated has gone away, one remembers a sense of large masses below the surface of the story...as if the author, at least, knew she was saying something important, or as if Jungian archetypes were stirring in Niven's hindbrain.

Now you get three choices:

1) Niven isn't equipped to understand these archetypes. The fact that he hasn't read Jung is irrelevant; nobody should have to learn an archetype. Perhaps it's because he is male, or doesn't hold down a regular job, or never hunted. Or--

2) Kate Wilhelm used Jungian archetypes in both of these stories, but badly. Or--

3) Kate did it right, but Jung was blowing swamp gas.

The thing is, I think I've spotted the flaw in these stories. But is it Kate's mistake or Jung's? The problem with *THE ENCOUNTER* and *THE HOUNDS* is that in both cases the protagonist is a rounded, believable human being.

Did Jung's list of Archetypes include a Protagonist? The subconscious must have its own idea of who is reacting to these other Archetypes. That being is the center of the universe. Its character is simplified, and its concerns are with weighty matters. It does not stop for traffic lights or make out income tax forms. To rid itself of the Hounds Archetype, it does not begin by advertising in the papers.

Using Jungian archetypes in fiction was probably worth a try. But Kate Wilhelm won't be able to work it until she learns how to write cardboard characters.

####

I've just read *THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE* and I love it! This John Varley writes like an idealized Larry Niven. I'm almost sure that statement wouldn't offend him. What I mean is, he writes like I thought I could write when I wrote *WORLD OF*

PTAUVS, only I couldn't. I'm still not good enough to do one of the things he did in this novel. Half his characters are clones of one Lilo, and he calls them all Lilo (until very near the end, when one becomes Diana), and I never got confused as to whom he was talking about. There are some unforgettable characters, like Javelin, who has radically altered her body, and whose Early Amazing Stories spaceship is named Cavorite: a beautiful touch. The ideas explode all over your mind, and they're rich, and they work.

I've read other stories set in Varley's future history, short stories, all good, all reflecting on each other and on this (probably) final novel. (\$7.95, from Quantum; very nice cover.)

There's another good novel out: INVOLUTION OCEAN, by Bruce Sterling. The planet is not too believable; it features an ocean of Clarke's Moondust (or my marsdust) with a breathable atmosphere above it, though there's no free water anywhere, not even enough to cement that ultrafine dust. If you can swallow that you'll enjoy the trip. Jove Science Fiction, \$1.50, and it's in #4 in the Harlan Ellison discovery series, with an intro by Harlan. Sterling claims his major influences were Clarke Ashton Smith, Larry Niven, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Harlan Ellison, a truly strange combination, and I have to add a fifth, because there's a flavor of Melville there. Sterling did not steal the plot of Moby Dick. But the first person character talks like Ishmael, a little, despite having personality problems Ishmael wouldn't even think about. What it is is a whaling story, with a difference.

ASCENTS OF WONDER

Ed David Gerrold
Popular Library, Dec., 1977, \$1.50

Reviewed by Steve Brown

David Gerrold was once responsible for an anthology of such unremitting awfulness (ALTERNITIES) that the discerning reader was drawn to it with the morbid fascination of a pacifist for documentaries on the Third Reich. It was elevated to cult status at Clarion '74, everybody had to own a copy. When I saw ASCENTS OF WONDER on the rack, I snatched it up with the evil glee of a true connoisseur of bad writing. But I was disappointed. Gerrold has forfeited his Roger Elwood Cup by turning in an anthology that is

generally interesting and readable, and with three genuinely outstanding stories.

The cover is an uncredited piece of hackwork (Nude Man with Blue Sheet Floating Through Giant Key-hole) that has appeared before, as the cover for TOO MANY MAGICIANS by DeCamp. The rest of the package is on a par, typos abound, the name of the story or author does not appear at the tops of the pages--but at least there is a table of contents.

Gerrold's skimpy three-paragraph intro is a glorification of the sensawunda, and reads with the anonymous hyperbole of a blurb.

The first story is "Tom Sawyer's Suborbital Escape" by two Texas writers: Lisa Tuttle, a deservedly respected craftswoman, and Steve Utley, who has a propensity for wasting his talent on trivialities. The story is told in the title, an attempt at writing a new Tom, Huck, and Jim adventure. They come close to Twain's immortal style, but miss it far enough to taste like stale beer. Nothing really happens. They try for the moon, fail (sort of), and wander off. I did appreciate the way Tom's spaceship, cobbled together out of some old boards, an old spinning wheel, and oddments that Aunt Polly was throwing out, was carefully not described.

Greg Feely is a new name to me, and "The Light at the End of the Penumbra" is a solid, professional story. He robs his theme (the necessity of human beings having new frontiers to explore) by making his analogy too artificial.

ANY LANGUAGE INCAPABLE
OF AMBIGUITY AND PARADOX
IS TOO SIMPLE-MINDED
TO BE OF ANY USE IN
THE REAL WORLD.

WE COULD USE
IT FOR LITERARY
CRITICISM.



An alien race is carefully set up to exactly reflect Feely's point, and it is too obviously an author's construction. A couple of times the characters are flattened into cardboard by acting like idiots, but it was a nice try.

I'm not sure what "Love Among the Symbionts" by J. Michael Reaves is doing here, but it is a fine story; a haunting and poignant tale told through the mind of a mute paraplegic in charge of a commune of the handicapped. The story concerns a touching psi encounter between the protagonist and a blind woman, each sharing with the other what they are normally denied. This one will stick with me for a while.

"A Modern Parable" is by Christopher J. Crowley, another new name. I liked it. It was a lot of fun. A mildly cynical comment on the real Golden Rule ("What's in it for Me?") told against the background of the most engaging chitkoaches in Joe Haldeman's ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED.

Stephen Goldin is listed as "associate editor", and the presence of his "Portrait of the Artist as a Young God" is suspect. Silverberg can get away with buying his own stories, few others can. But I'll accept it. It is an Italo Calvino story about Godlike Beings (hyper-evolved humans) who play with suns like tennis balls. It is amusing, though without Calvino's flair, and with a telegraphed punch-line. It has some nicely caustic comments about We Parasites, the critics. Culture Sculpture sounds like fun, and I wish Goldin had favored us with a description of his artist's finished 'piece'.

And now we come to the first of the outstanding stories, a perfect gem by the inimitable George Alec Effinger. "The Exempt" is a subtle title that throws the story into bas relief. This is prime Effinger, quietly hilarious, empathic, written with a blithe disregard of all story-telling conventions, and conceptually rooted exactly 87 degrees out of phase with the rest of literature. It's about a coin-operated voice-recording booth in a small arcade near Bourbon Street, New Orleans, where the Alternate Center of the Universe, "the absolute exclamation point of reality" is located--and it is worth the price of the book to visit it.

"Scrapings" by Kenneth Von Gunden is turgid, incoherent and over-written--"...a glowing sperm cell laser beam straight on a featureless path through a space sea of

infertility". As far as I can tell, the theme is nothing more than the static contemplation of the Ineffable Awfulness of hyperspace. The author shows promise in spots, but he is in serious need of a governor on his throttle.

Mel Gilden's "The Perambulator" is one of those silly nutty-alien stories that read like an old Warner Bros. cartoon. I liked it, talking potted palms and all. It was a lot more fun than an equivalent weight of Ron Goulart.

Diamond is the proverbial rough who is Daniel P. Dem? His "White Hole" is a searing allegory about white holes as sources of creative expression. A magnificent, jagged and strobing picture of the interface between art and science. Brilliant. Somebody buy more of this man's work.

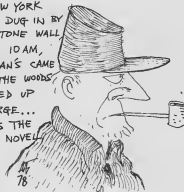
Michael G. Coney is a competent, inventive and witty writer. "Just an Old-Fashioned War Story" is a competent, inventive and witty story. The characters breathe, the story moves and the prose is thick and meaty. But it's still just another outwitting-the-killer-robots story and handled with graceless cynicism.

Yet another fine story, the rather arbitrarily titled "Contact Myth" by Joe Pumlilia, another Texas writer. This is a tale of those most mysterious of ancient peoples that have populated the banks of the Euphrates--the Sumerians--and of an alien who lived among them and directed them to build a gigantic computer of brick and water. The story is lovingly told through the uncomprehending eye of Naboni, a scribe, with a dazzling wealth of background detail.

And finally, the big one. "E-quinotical" by John Varley. For those familiar with Varley's universe, this is a story of the symbs, those plant-like beings who encase a human into a permanent closed eco-system. The story is set where all symb stories take place, the Rings of Saturn. There is the usual pyrotechnical engineering, leavened with the humor of a Swiftian conflict between two quasi-religious groups; one fanatically devoted to the multi-thousand generation project of painting every rock in one of the Rings bright red, and the opposing sect, equally devoted to removing the paint. I prefer the lyrical beauty of Varley's earlier symb story, "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance" (GALAXY, July '76), but this one won't disappoint the author's readers. As usual, every detail seems exactly right, down to the strange emotions and inter-personal by-play which is so perfectly suit-

ed to the story that it becomes hard to identify with the characters. They become as alien as their environment.

AN WAS WITH THE
25TH NEW YORK
CRITICS, DUG IN BY
THE LOW STONE WALL
IN ABOUT 10 AM,
THE SFWANS CAME
OUT OF THE WOODS
AN FORMED UP
TO CHARGE...
"WAT WAS THE
JAY THE NOVELL
DIED!



STAR SONGS OF AN OLD PRIMATE

By James Tiptree, Jr. Collection
Introduced by Ursula K. LeGuin
Del Rey Books, 1978
7 Stories, 270 Pages, \$1.75

Reviewed by Robert Frazier

A. The introduction is frosting on the cake. LeGuin conscientiously handles Tiptree's low-profile request to write it, but moreover goes on to write a lucid, down-to-earth look at the Tiptree/Raccoona Sheldon/Alice Sheldon phenomenon. Tho much like an opal with fires dancing inside, LeGuin is careful to maintain emphasis on the real jewels of the collections.

The impact of this grouping will be reduced for those readers who have/have read the two novels: A MOMENTARY TASTE OF BEING AND HOUSTON, HOUSTON, DO YOU READ?, 100 and 60 pages respectively. These both are confined to people confined (friction and clashing) within space vehicles. Also, both are written in the "perceptions-are-increasingly-altered mode" that Tiptree uses for a portion of her work. She is good at the evolving viewpoint. A similarly structured novelette concerning a psychologist is included from NEW DIMENSIONS 6. The stories themselves differ greatly, as do the styles of the three short stories. "And So On, And So On", an open story of conversation, little incidence and quiet message. "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever", a nonlinear, recurring lifeline story packing incredible amounts of emotion, image and vitality. "She Waits for All Men Born", a piece which builds a sweeping scope of Space and Time with a story and an unforgettable character, Snow, en-

capulated within. STAR SONGS... also includes a previously uncollected novelette, the most conventional SF story here. Early Tiptree (1969) that is superb and could easily suffer an expansion into a novel; that much happens in 40 pages. "Your Haploid Heart" is the only piece from out of the magazines, the rest are from original anthologies. An indication of the author's growth of stature.

A Prime. Or more basically put, all things considered, one can't go wrong with a Tiptree collection. This, the third, ably supports her reputation for a consistently high standard of writing. Subject and content must be judged by the reader's taste. (Historically a majority of critics seem to have acquired one.) This package has an aura of quality.

THE DREAM DETECTIVE

By Sax Rohmer
Dover, #3.00

Reviewed by Lee Weinstein

This is an unabridged republication of the 1926 British edition and contains nine stories. I cannot help but wonder why Dover did not choose to reprint the 1925 American edition, which contained ten stories. In any case, this is a nicely packaged, high quality softcover edition, permanently bound with the pages sewn in signatures.

The dream detective of the title is an eccentric old-antique dealer named Morris Klaw, who made his first appearance in the April, 1913 issue of THE NEW MAGAZINE in England. Unlike other literary figures loosely lumped together under the term "psychic detective", Klaw investigates crimes of human origin. It is his method of solving the crimes that places these stories in the realm of the occult. Klaw's theory is that human thoughts have an independent existence and remain in the ether long after the person who thought them has gone. By sleeping in the room where a crime has taken place, Klaw can pick up the thoughts of the criminal or possibly the victim. Typically, the thoughts he receives are fragmentary, but are sufficient to provide a clue to the criminal's identity. (It is an interesting sidelight that Rohmer himself believed in this theory and conducted some experiments along these lines.) To insulate himself from too many distracting thoughts, Klaw sleeps on an "odically sterilised" cushion during an investigation. ("Od" is a hypothetical all-

pervasive force once associated with mesmerism.) Klav also solves some crimes by means of a "science of cycles". This is a theory that certain objects become a focus of criminal activity at regularly recurring intervals.

The stories themselves are competently written and rather colorful mysteries. Some involve murders, some involve thefts, and some are just plain bizarre. They revolve about such exotic items as an Athenian harp which once belonged to Lucretia Borgia, a flawless 132 carat blue diamond which disappears from a locked room, and a series of Egyptian mummies which are mysteriously decapitated.

The story that stands out in my mind is "The Veil of Isis", because it is more a tale of supernatural horror than a mystery, and because it does have an occult explanation. However, none of the stories, including this one, build up any real atmosphere of supernatural horror, as one would find in Blackwood's JOHN SILENCE or Hodgson's CARNACKI THE GHOST-FINDER. They are not stories of mood. They are, rather, entertaining and exotic, and would make an interesting addition to anyone's collection.

BATTLE CIRCLE

A Trilogy by Piers Anthony
Avon Books, 537 pp., \$2.25

Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

Although this superb trilogy was initially published in the U.S. by Bantam, so fast did those copies disappear that for several years fans have had to buy the British editions sold at conventions, or not have them. Now the good news is double. Not only are the three books back in print, but they are all in one volume. (The cover art here and back mural are the illustrations from the three English CORGI paperbacks.)

The trilogy takes place in a post-holocaust warrior society. The nomads have a rigid code. No man may be forced to fight and all combat is formal, in a circle, with rules and stakes agreed upon in advance. The nomads are supplied and controlled by the "crazys", pacifists who have retained an amount of civilization and technology. The trilogy tells the story of the fall and rebirth of this way of life.

SOS THE ROPE begins with the chance meeting of two swordsmen and one woman. The men are to become the greatest of their age; Sol, master of all weapons, and Sos, who,

defeated by Sol, takes up a non-circle weapon, the rope, and becomes first Sol's architect of empire and later his nemesis. As their lives intertwine, the men discover the dark secret of their world, are used, and rebel. Through it all is the strange woman they both love working for her own private ambition.

VAR THE STICK is about a mutant. Physically grotesque, Var can feel, and thus avoid, radiation. About a quarter of the way through the book the story line leaves the trilogy's main theme when he goes on an adventurous odyssey with a young girl. Enjoyable enough, should not be skipped, but not up to the level of the rest of the books.

NEQ THE SWORD goes back a bit in time to pick up the epic theme in the life of one of Sol's lieutenants. After the total collapse of the nomad society, Neq's wife is killed and he is mutilated. When vengeance does nothing to ease his pain, Neq sets himself the impossible task of rebuilding the world as he has known it before.

In prose as sharp as a nomad's sword, and as stark as their lives, Anthony writes of the price of heroism, the power of love, the futility of vengeance, and the weight of responsibility. It is often brutal, but beautiful in the realization of its ambitious scope.

DARKNESS WEAVES

By Karl Edward Wagner
Warner Books, \$1.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

DARKNESS WEAVES has a story behind the story. It was originally sold to a small publishing company--Powell Press, in 1969. Before publishing it, Powell thereupon commenced to edit the book with a dull meat cleaver, mutilating the book more than any book deserves to be. Among the edits, there was the trimming of the imaginary units of money used in the book, but the explanatory conversions to U.S. dollars were left in, making the characters pay for an assassination in a medieval-type world in dollars! Lin Carter took Karl Wagner to task for this mistake not of his causing in the book IMAGINARY WORLDS. Another triumph of editorial skill was to change the description of the protagonist, Kane, to match Powell's cover illustration. The worst of this was that the description wasn't changed throughout the book, so one chapter had a description of Kane as having black hair, while the next night

have the original description of him as red-haired and blue-eyed.

Fortunately, Warner Books has brought out the original version of Karl Edward Wagner's DARKNESS WEAVES the first few chapters which were serialized a few years back in MIDNIGHT SUN. The book is another of Wagner's novels of the doomed warrior Kane, based on the Biblical Cain.

The book is about a once-beautiful, but now hideously maimed sorcerer, who plots to gain an empire and revenge against the king who had her mutilated. Kane and an amiable assassin friend of his are drawn into the plot to sieze the island empire. Plots, sub-plots and other intricacies follow, complicated with memories of how Kane had once tried to sieze the islands himself in the distant past. The book builds to the powerful no-win climax which mark so many of Kane's exploits.

The book's plot is almost secondary to the personality of Kane himself. By no means a hero, Kane is described as one of the first men, who rebelled against the playing Utopia made by man's creator by killing his own brother. For this he is cursed with immortality, until he is killed by the same violence he brought into the world, and marked with mad, killer's eyes: The Mark of Kane.

The "acid gothic" style of Wagner's gets the reader involved, pulling her or she into the story. Besides the story and characters, Wagner is also a good hand at "world-making", creating a believable and fascinating world for the story.

The previous Kane novel, DARK CRUSADE, was nominated for a World Fantasy Award at the October convention and had not this one been already published before (in a different form, though), it would have likely been up for one also. Frank Frazetta's cover for this book is one of the best things he's done in recent years.



THE VIVISECTOR

A Column By Darrell Schweitzer



ORBIT 19
Ed. Damon Knight
Harper & Row, 1977, 262 pp., \$9.95

Damon Knight said in a letter to SFR a couple issues back that he's trying to make ORBIT more "accessible" to his audience. Since Harper & Row is dropping the series with #21, and unless Damon finds another publisher, that'll be the end, any added accessibility at this point may be too little too late. ORBIT has been declining in readership and prestige for years. When it started, lots of attention, climaxing in a year when all the Nebula nominees were from volumes 6 and 7. Then science fiction began to go in other directions, and the leading anthology became a backwater. (Just like NEW WORLDS.) For readership the real blow fell when Putnam dumped ORBIT after #13. There have been no paperbacks since then, no doubt the problem with Harper & Row, since unless you're Doubleday and sell very cheap editions by subscription to libraries, an unpaperbacked hardcover isn't much of a money-maker.

I'm the only person I know who still reads ORBIT. Over the years Knight has managed to drive off all but his most faithful readers, and a few book reviewers. It's a shame, because the books have definitely bottomed out (with #17) and are getting better, but when the audience has been burned over and over again, it doesn't come back. Some people will even tell you what specifically scared them off. My friend Lee Weinstein says James Sallis' "Only the Words are Different" in #9 did it for him, after which he stopped getting ORBIT out of the library. Like most readers, he resents time wasted on non-functional word patterns.

As far as accessibility goes, I'm happy to report that nothing in ORBIT 19 doesn't at least attempt to communicate with the reader. And there are some fine stories present, more than half the book in fact, but still some bad enough to do damage.

"Lollipop and Tar Baby" is mid-

dling John Varley, which means it is capably written and ceaselessly inventive. Varley is one of the few SF writers to understand what John Campbell meant when he said the future "doesn't happen one at a time". In Varley's future not one thing is different, but many. This in turn leads to a head-on collision with Wells' rule about pigs flying over hedges. If pigs fly over hedges, fine, but if all other animals do, that's too much. You have to have one main premise, a primary wonder. In a future with many wonders, the premise is the one which is unusual even to the characters living there. The rest is background. Varley doesn't handle this as well as he should. Two of his wonders, including the main one, a sentient black hole, are not explained. The story threatens to tear apart, to become scattershot. This is why I hold my breath for John Varley. He's certainly the most promising new writer to enter the field in a decade, since Zelazny and Delany, but look what happened to them. SF has a way of destroying its best recruits through premature deification, so a writer thinks he knows all there is well before he even suspects what all there is to learn. His worst tendencies take over and the result may be weak tea like many later Zelazny novels, or a catastrophe on the scale of DHALGREN.

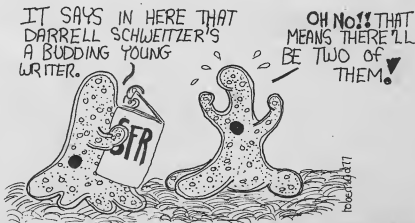
If Varley were to become self-indulgent he would become first scattershot, then incoherent and the audience would drop him cold. He must learn that a story is not a bag of tricks strung together. "Lollipop" is unified, but just barely.

"State of Grace" is a totally atypical Kate Wilhelm story, a wacky fantasy of the UNKNOWN variety, about little men living in a tree and the rivalry of a husband and wife over what to do about them. Wilhelm displays hitherto absent humor, and the technique of the telling is interesting. The narrative is very spare, almost synoptic, and it should be because all the images are familiar (except the little men) and require little description, and the story is an account of events over a period of time. This is harder to do than it looks. Go too far one way and you have a lifeless outline, too far the other and the point is lost in the verbiage.

After this, the bane of ORBIT readers, two impenetrable stories in a row. Gene Wolfe's "Many Mansions" fails, I think, because it is not a story, just a retrospective dialogue between two one-dimensional characters about things significant only to them. Result: tedium.

Felix Gotschalk's "The Veil Over the River" shows his style has improved to the point he can communicate, although he's still not what I would call a graceful writer, but with the fog cleared away he doesn't seem to have anything to say. Of course, I may have misunderstood everything, but if so, chances are 95% of the other readers will also. The author hasn't done his job. So much for accessibility.

While we're on the subject, I don't see how the uninitiated will



be able to make sense out of Stephen Robinett's "Tomus", which is actually a rather good story once you have fallen back on your knowledge of previous SF stories and understood what it's about. Lacking is enough exposition at the front to make the premise clear. At first I thought Tomus was a computer/robot and the other character a human, then Tomus an immortal and the other a dying man in his care for some reason, but then I recognized the familiar situation of immortality by transplanting personalities into new, artificially grown bodies. The other character is a rudimentary personality in the new body. Then all falls into place and the drama of the man/infant coming to awareness in someone else's skull becomes powerful and moving. Of course, the author could have made himself completely clear without a lecture, just by starting out "There was another person sharing my head with me". Tell 'em outright, and immediately.

R.A. Lafferty's "Fall of Pebble-Stones" is more easily comprehensible than most of his stories, because it's simply delightful nonsense, like a prose version of Edward Lear or the Mervyn Peake of *RYMES WITHOUT REASON*. The pebbles of the title only appear under the eaves of inhabited houses. The pebble angel puts them there. (No kidding.)

Back to the pits, and it seemed for me a return trip to the AS-IMOV's SF slush pile--Michael McClintock's "Under Jupiter" is a total failure. Common problems of not yet publishable writers--story too long for idea, and the author is unable to make his characters or scenes distinct enough to be followed. There was an interesting description of a zero-G art exhibition, and maybe there's a real story buried here somewhere, but after 15 pages I saw nary a glimmer. O. Henry used to say a new writer should tear about that many pages off the front of his manuscript, and that's where the story starts. This means you, Michael McClintock. I'm not sure Knight has done this writer any service by publishing him at so primitive a level of development.

A much more promising discovery is Michael Connor. There's no working definition of good fiction, but Alexei Panshin's call for whole characters and whole action makes sense to me, and Connor's "Vamp" fits the bill. It is convincing and vivid. The only problem, it is of a familiar type, the tale of the young artist of the future

struggling wearily with some new artform (usually electronic). Since young and/or new writers tend to write these things, and they tend to write despairing stories, stories of this kind frequently end in futility and the death of the protagonist. Yep, it did, right on schedule.

Another specimen of the same is Scott Edelstein's "The Exhibition" (in *BEST FROM SF MONTHLY*, N.E.L.) which did also.

Gene Wolfe redeems himself with another entry, "To the Dark Tower Came." We usually sneeze "surrealism" at this sort of thing in lieu of examining it--as I understand the term, surrealism means use of external situations and settings to indicate mental states. This should be distinguished from a completely fantastic scene held together for a short stretch by sheer strangeness. Would you believe Gloucester and Kent from *KING LEAR* (though the latter is related to Clark Kent, alias Superman) and a topless, bottomless tower which may connect the Earth and the Moon?

Alas, another failure: "Beings of Game P-U" by Philip Teich is fanzine stuff, a mixture of E.E. Smith parody and Scientology. I am too eager to hang onto my wallet to get close to Scientology, so I don't know its jargon well, which is why I couldn't make head or tail out of this thing. Imagine the poor reader who doesn't know his *Lensmen* either. Accessible?

And while we're being esoteric, there's a very fine novelet called "The Disguise" by Kim Stanley Robinson, which I do understand because I know considerably more about Elizabethan/Jacobean revenge tragedies than I do about L. Ron Hubbard. This is very much of an English major's story. If you don't know who John Webster was, you may have problems. If you know nothing about *HAMLET* and the tradition it was written in, forget it. Writing a story which depends on other literature is fair, but the author must be aware it is self-limiting.

Actors in the future learn roles through memory implants. Alas, somebody slipped a cog and came out thinking he was mad Hieronimo from *THE SPANISH TRAGEDY* and haunts the plays, Phantom of the Opera style, bumping off villains for real. The poor protagonist finds himself playing the villain opposite somebody he's sure is the madman. Robinson deftly fogs up reality and make-believe so the story progresses as a

revenge play as the play being acted (an ingeniously invented imaginary work "attributed" to Webster) progresses, and both climax at the same time. The ending is not wholly satisfactory. It is logical and fitting, but it's presented as a "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" type twist, and I saw it coming half way through.

Two other relatively new writers are present. Kevin O'Donnell's "Night Shift" is a standard story of a social idea present through the actions of a person in that society. It is competently written and as interesting as the idea. (Moderately.) Eleanor Arnason's "Going Down" has a more innovative idea, but is fragmentary. Neither character nor situation are complete. Did the last ten pages of this manuscript get lost?

The good outweighs the bad in this volume. Now, if the bad were eliminated, we might have something viable here.

THE RETURN OF SKULL FACE

By Robert E. Howard and Richard Lupoff, FAX, 1977, 96 pp. Special Edition, \$17.00 Regular Edition, \$9.95

Paperback blur writers are going to have a ball with this one --"armies of opium-crazed thugs, the nameless horror from Atlantis, the horrible Oriental face in the window, the missing idol, the curse on the English manor house, eery adventures on the moors, the monster from the depths, the evil priest of Atlantis, at least three beautiful girls in distress, two brawny heroes and a partridge in a pear tree"--but whether you'll like it or not is a different matter. It's 100% pure 1930s pulp cliché with no preservatives or 1970s additives. Lupoff wrote about half the text, the rest being sequel to *SKULL FACE* abandoned by REH in 1931 because *WEIRD TALES* was making noises about going bimonthly. He never got back to it, even though WT did not go bimonthly and ran several Howard serials. Hardly a great loss to humanity.

Certainly Lupoff has done a skillful job of posthumous collaboration. He has taken a fragment which is slightly less than halfway up the scale from the worst Howard to the best, certainly better than many recent barrel scrapings (or some reprints, like the wretched detective tales *PHANTASY DIGEST* has been foisting on us),

and completed it without making it the slightest bit better or different. Quality of writing and plotting are consistent throughout and the prose is so close you can't tell where one author stopped and another began. The second half is fully as silly as the first. You have heard of thrill-a-minute writing? Well, Howard didn't wait that long. Scarcely two pages pass before there's another convulsion and somebody vanishes, or knife-wielding assassins pop out of the woodwork. When things seem calmed down for perhaps twenty words, surprise, one of the good guys is killed by lightning, apparently directed by the gentleman of the title. The appalling filminess of the plot (and total non-characterization) is concealed by frantic action until the end, when you realize Skull Face went through a lot of trouble, and a lot of coincidences worked just to get the hero in a pool with a 30-foot long squid-lamprey, which, true to the RHI hero's code, he dispatches with his bare hands without much effort.

Of course, it is very readable, as all but the worst Howard fiction is. If you are willing to chain and gag your critical faculties in a dungeon beneath the Palace of Pleasure in Linehouse, then go upstairs for a snort first, you might even enjoy it.

The "special edition" apparently is made special by the signatures of the artist (Steve Leiloha, who did a good cover but otherwise undistinguished Ditko-ish comic book interiors) and Lupoff, plus a slightly different binding. Any way there were only 150 of them, so they're probably gone. The regular edition will remain in print only a couple months, then soar in value. Good for a quickly returned investment, if nothing else.

ACE REPRINTS

Ace has been sending very few new titles of late, mostly reprints from their long backlist, and a few other people's backlists. THE DEVIL IN A FOREST (224 pp., \$1.50) by Gene Wolfe was a Follett hardcover last year. Despite the cover blurbs, it is not fantasy, but a juvenile historical novel set in the Middle Ages. Pretty good, too. I guess there is no way to paper-back it except as fantasy. Some categories just aren't read much any more, especially by the paper-

back audience. CONJURE WIFE by Fritz Leiber (251 pp. \$1.95) is a classic example of how to make an original look like an imitation through packaging. Remember how Harry Harrison's *PLAGUE FROM SPACE* became THE JUPITER LEGACY in the wake of THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN? Well, now Leiber's classic witchcraft novel from 1943 is made to look like another bestseller devil book, like SALEM'S LOT, THE EXORCIST, THE SENTINEL, etc. The same black see-thru-to-second-cover arrangement and a blurb "No power on earth could save her from the ultimate violation..." You will not find this in the SF section—the fantasy label is carefully avoided—so look for it in among the mainstream bestsellers, or perhaps the gothics. Readers of these categories, however, may find it too imaginative for their tastes. After all, not one Possessed Child out to get revenge on the world that invented puberty. It'll outlast the current fad, I am sure. OUR FRIENDS FROM FROLIX 8 by Philip K. Dick (281 pp. \$1.50) is not top drawer Dick, but his middle drawers are more interesting than most. In it God is definitely dead. His body has been found floating in deep space. Among other things. I seem to recall this used to be a thinner book. There is a definite trend these days toward big print and wide margins, and pages "killed" by starting chapters on a new one. Did I hear something about a paper shortage? THE KING IN YELLOW by Robert W. Chambers is a classic eldritch fantasy which has been shambling in and out of print since 1895. Chambers wrote about a hundred mainstream books also, all of which have been forgotten. There may be a lesson there somewhere. The contents of this edition differ vastly from the Dover version, which is all Chambers' fantasies, from many collections, while the Ace edition follows the original, complete with several non-fantasies about Chambers' experiences as an art student in Paris. (Many contain good descriptions of the siege by the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War.) The fantasies center around a blasphemous and forbidden book which did not inspire H.P. Lovecraft to invent the NECRONOMANCAN, since his letters show he discovered Chambers late and mentioned him as part of a last-minute addition to THE SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE, well after Alhazred had slithered onto the scene. PAST MASTER by R.A. Lafferty is a strange cosmic comedy about Thomas More and Utopia, among other

things. I remember during the New Wave years the book was claimed by both sides. Originally it was one of Terry Carr's prestigious Ace Specials. It had a better cover then.

TWO CURIOSITIES

ALIEN FLESH

By Seabury Quinn

Intro by E. Hoffman Price

Illustrated by Stephen Fabian
Train, 1977, 236 pages, \$10.00

A curiosity? Yes, and more. Seabury Quinn's Jules de Grandin series made him the most popular of all WEIRD TALES contributors during the 20s and 30s, even though they were strictly formula stuff, with every conceivable weird menace shoe-horned into the same plot, as if the TV series THE NIGHT STALKER had been run deeper and deeper into the ground not for a single season, but almost a hundred episodes. H.P. Lovecraft made the most apt comment: There were enough good ideas ruined by such cookie-cutter methods that maybe somebody ought to get the author's permission to go back and write the stories. Quinn showed real promise as something other than a literary number painter only in a few non-de Grandin stories, those collected in IS THE DEVIL A GENTLEMAN?, a few uncollected ones like "The Phantom Farmhouse" and *ROADS*. Certainly I never expected to encounter an ambitious and genuinely adult novel from him after all this time.

I WOULDN'T MIND
WRITING SOME
SWORD 'N SORCERY
STUFF IF I WASN'T
SUCH AN AWFUL
SPELLER.



ALLEN FLESH was apparently written between 1950, but for what market I can't imagine. Not any of the pulp outlets, surely. The emphasis is on character and strictly speaking, there is only one supernatural scene. Besides that, by the standards of the day it probably would have been considered pornographic. If written by someone today it would be pornographic. Few could resist the temptation in a story about an American archeologist (male) trapped in the body of an Egyptian harem girl. Our noble Editor knows the porno field better than I do, and can probably name a dozen carrot books (or one-handed reading, if you will) with the same plot.

Quinn admits that sex exists, and runs a range from a scene with the hero(ine)'s doddering 80+ Arab husband which borders on necrophilia to an attempted lesbian seduction, but the book is really a serious novel about adjustment, identity and sex roles. Aside from a conveniently romantic ending in which the protagonist is reconciled to being a woman and finds true happiness in the arms of a lifelong friend, Quinn is surprisingly realistic and convincing. Harem life is seen as tedious, suffocating chattel slavery amidst physical luxury, the very thing for which the term "gilded cage" was invented. When the guy/gal does something stupid and visits his/her parents, who of course don't recognize him/her, the scene is painful, embarrassing and impossible to resolve, as it really would be. (Although the bit about the mouse mystifies me as much as it does the character.) Throughout, the male identity and the female thought/behavior patterns clash, and ultimately blend. I'm obviously not in a position to say if Quinn's version of how women think and perceive themselves is true to life, but it is consistent enough to work as fiction. Radical Feminists will probably be horrified at the whole thing but I'd like to know how other women react to it.

A few obvious flaws could have been edited away. I almost didn't get past the first fifty pages. Literally, the story starts on page 51. What precedes is the encounter between the Egyptian lady and the school chum, plus pages and pages of descriptions of how Mysterious and Exotic she is, all as hokey and padded as the rest is believable and spare. I seriously advise you to skip the first chapter and you can also skip chapter six, wherein the author threatens to abandon his interesting subject matter and lurch into an inane melodrama about beautiful Russian spies, hulking German

sadists, etc. Fortunately the aforementioned manage to kill each other off in short order without doing any serious damage to the real storyline.

I wish Quinn had written more like this. I wish the market and the readers had allowed him to.

A WINTER WISH AND OTHER POEMS
By H.P. Lovecraft
Editor, Tom Collins
Whispers press, 1977, 190 pp, \$10.00

This one is halfway between a curiosity and a white elephant. The curious part is that as Lovecraft's literary stature, based entirely on his fiction, increases (the jacket takes care to mention that one critic placed HPL among the world's ten greatest writers, along with Homer, Shakespeare, Tolstoy and that crowd), a few people have actually come to believe he was of some importance as a poet. The majority opinion was expressed by August Derleth, otherwise Idolliser #1, in the introduction COLLECTED POEMS. He found the bulk of HPL verse "painfully dull" and quoted Winfield Scott as saying it was "18th Century rubbish".

Now the world will get a chance to make up its own mind. A WINTER WISH contains a large selection of poems not in the COLLECTED POEMS. It is clearly intended to be definitive. All varieties of verse are represented, many specimens published here for the first time. The book has the feel of a college text, complete with scholarly introduction, extensive notes, index to first lines, and numbering of every five lines of the poems. (Alright class. For tomorrow memorize lines 35-70 of 'The Simple Speller's Tale'--ghaak!) Collins goes to great length, and he argues knowledgeably, trying to convince us that the poems are important, they contribute significantly to our understanding of Lovecraft's thought, etc. etc. Derleth, Scott and the rest were simply wrong, says he.

Alas, when we actually read the poems, the thesis is torpedoed. For example, we find political doggerel:

'So in each age the German
wolf we find,
The spoiler, scourge of man-
kind.
In evil pomp dark Wilhelm's
form discern,
Resolv'd the weak'n'g nations
to overturn;
Close by his side his chinless
Princeling sits,
As rich in arrogance as poor
in wits;
(Germania--1918")

And literary criticism:

'Behold great Whitman, whose
licentious line
Delights the rake, and warms
the souls of swine,'
("Fragrant on Whitman")

And schoolboy pastiches of Poe:

'It was in the pale gardens
of Zais,
The mist-shrouded gardens
of Zais,
Where blossoms of white
nephaliot,
The redolent herald of
midnight,'
"Nathicana")

'Black loom the crags of the
uplands behind me,
Dark are the sands of the
far-stretching shore.
Dian are the pathways and
rocks that remind me
Sadly of years in the lost
Nevermore.'

("The Bride of the Sea")

When we learn that Lovecraft subtitled this last ditty, "A Dull Dark Dactylic Deterium in 16 Silly Stanzas" we begin to suspect that HPL had a much more realistic opinion of this stuff than does Dr. Collins.

Actually, aside from about a dozen poems of slight merit, mostly humorous ones, and a couple oddities like a parody of THE WASTE LAND, there is something worthwhile in this volume: the notes give us a detailed picture of HPL's amateur journalism career, one of the most important things in his life. So A WINTER WISH is an important contribution to the field, but the contribution is biographical, not poetic.

(Whispers Press, Box 904, Chapel Hill, NC, 27514. A 200 copy boxed, signed edition available for \$20.)



BY RAY PALMER

INTRODUCTION BY DAVID A. TRUESDALE

December 31, 1977

"The Stymie Factor" was given to me because I specifically asked Ray for it back in early June of 1977. I had driven over to Amherst to give Ray the final copy for TANGENT 7/8; to talk with him about the cover stock, quality of paper to be used, price, etc. Finishing this business, Ray mentioned that he would be attending a UFO convention in Chicago on the 25th of June where he would make a speech. "The Stymie Factor" is that speech. He went over with me, verbally, everything contained in the speech--the philosophy, metaphysics, and quite a large number of objections I raised at each and every step, having taken on the role of Devil's Advocate (which Ray enjoyed because we ended up talking for more than two hours) ---in order to test my reaction to it.

'Having talked with Ray for perhaps a total of maybe fourteen hours in my two-year business association with him I knew how skeptical and reluctant, extremely so at times, he was to put himself up to ridicule (he touches on this point in the speech, you'll note).

'So whether I should have felt this way or not I don't know, but I felt somewhat flattered that he had seen fit to really let down and let me in on what was obviously to him an important matter.

'At the close of July, as I once more drove to Amherst to pick up the bulk of TANGENT 7/8 (approximately ten days before his death, Ray was in the best spirits I had ever seen him in. Casual, smiling, he told me that his speech had gone very well indeed. He had received a standing ovation at its close, and an Australian film outfit that had come to do a documentary on the convention as a whole was so taken with Ray Palmer and what he had to say, that they decided to do the entire film on him alone! When I asked if he had transcribed it yet he nodded, walking up the creaky wooden stairs to the second floor of the old, two-story schoolhouse he had turned into his printing shop, and returned with the origin-

al blue-penciled copy of his speech ---which he gave to me with a smile, telling me I could do what I wanted with it.

'As far as I can recall, I believe he was to print it in his magazine, SEARCH, for one of its Summer issues...or as the Summer issue (I'm not at all sure of the magazine's publishing schedule. And since I don't read SEARCH, I've no idea if it ever saw print there or not.).

'I hope your readers will give the piece a look. Whether or not they find they can actually believe 5% or 50% or even 100% of it is no matter. What does matter, for what it's worth, is that I am convinced Ray Palmer believed it, thus making for some highly interesting reading, if nothing else.'



ROUTE ME TO THE
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER IN THIS CHICKEN
SHIT OUTFIT !



Thirty years ago the flying saucers were "born" out of the famous sighting by Kenneth Arnold on June 24, 1947. He reported seeing nine disc-shaped aerial objects flying in formation over Mt. Ranier, moving "with a strange motion, like stones being skipped over water". He coined the term "flying saucers", a name that has stuck with them in spite of the more modern attempt to dignify the phenomena by calling them UFOs, or Unidentified Flying Objects. Perhaps the latter terminology is most apt because one thing is certain even thirty years later: they are still unidentified. That is where this writer comes in ---and where he confronts what he has chosen to call "the stymie factor".

Actually, this year is the thirty-third anniversary of the flying saucers for Ray Palmer, because it was in 1944 that he first learned of their existence. Thus he can claim to be the true pioneer in the saga of unidentified flying objects. It is also true that over the past thirty years more than 400 books have been written by investigators into the strange phenomenon. Some of these books have made their writers a considerable sum of money. Some of these investigators have attained world-wide fame for their efforts. It has been said recently that it is very strange indeed that the foremost and most successful and most vigorous of the investigators is almost totally ignored in the most important and official of these books on flying saucers, and is almost totally unknown in modern-day UFO circles. The reason for this is inherent in the "stymie factor", and it is this factor which demands explanation at this time. It has also been said that, except for Ray Palmer, there might well have been UFO mystery today.

Thirty-three years is a generation. It seems fitting that I should now challenge the stymie factor, considering that at age 66, having come to the end of my generation, I come to grips with and repeat a prediction I made thirty years ago which has continued to be accurate over all those years. Today in relation to that prediction,

I want to issue a challenge; if it cannot be accepted, I will rest my case. If it can, it is time that saucer buffs begin to speak of facts, not the fantasy that has overspread the UFO scene from the very beginning. Some of this fantasy is exactly that, and some of it is deliberate deceit and misinformation and propaganda, most of it for the simplest of reasons---one of the primary factors in the stymie factor---the fear of ridicule.

One person, steeped in tradition, status quo and formal education, when faced with a "flying saucer", resorts to ridicule to keep himself free of any stigma of kookiness or irrationality. Another, being in the position of being termed an "expert", does not wish to expose himself to the charge of not knowing his business or of being inefficient, incompetent and undependable, so he also resorts to ridicule. Perhaps this is the first evidence of the stymie factor, because it is this fear of being made to look ridiculous before his fellows that has resulted in many saucer sighters failing to report their sightings.

My first real encounter with the stymie factor was actually the second, but it was first in importance, and best to use to begin my case in point. It was about 1950, during a science fiction convention in Chicago, that I found myself engaged in a debate with Willy Ley (who in future years became one of the world's experts in rocketry and occupied a prominent position in Mission Control at launches to the moon as a scientific commentator and advisor to the broadcasting networks).

The subject of our debate was the flying saucers, with myself as the proponent, and with Willy Ley taking the negative. I came to the debate armed with a significant array of the sort of evidence that was available, which consisted of many sightings, among them those still listed today as "unidentified" by such dedicated investigators as the Air Force and the famed Dr. Hynek, originally hired by the Air Force to provide some answers (preferably---my opinion---negative answers). It was quite a long jump from Hynek to Dr. Condon, who was the final effort of the powers that be in the military arm of government to lay the saucers in their grave, but the answers were exactly the same---the stymie factor had overwhelmed them both. The official stance of the Air Force remained unchallenged and as valid as it had from the very beginning: 1. The flying saucers do not constitute a men-

ace to national security, and 2. There is no evidence that spaceships are visiting us from other star systems. I could not agree more! It is also true that there is no evidence that there are elephants in my back yard, nor do they constitute a menace to my security! And that is exactly where the Air Force stance remains today---in the realm of total fantasy!

It has been said recently, in a "fan" magazine published by a prominent UFO researcher, that Willy Ley "totally demolished" Ray Palmer in his long-ago debate in Chicago. This is absolutely true, and it is the important encounter with the stymie factor that I have mentioned.

Here is how it came about, and it was an eye-opener to me: if you will remember Kenneth Arnold's reference to how the saucers flew "like stones skipped over the water", you will understand the question that Willy Ley put to me when he asked: "How do the saucers fly?" But before I could quote Mr. Arnold, he proved that he had come to the debate fully prepared with powerful evidence and arguments and irrefutable logic---he withdrew from his coat pocket an ordinary china saucer (minus the cup) and tossed it high into the air. It hit the stage floor and shattered into a hundred pieces. "That's how saucers fly!" he said. But his words were drowned in the roar of laughter that came from the audience of several thousand people. It was my first public encounter with the stymie factor. Ridicule had "demolished" me and my argument. Any evidence that I had (and I had some!) became impossible to present.

Perhaps it was not to my credit, but in the balance of the debate I adopted the tactics of the "enemy", and resorted to ridicule also---but my ridicule was not obvious to the audience, nor even sensed by Mr. Ley himself: I deliberately steered my arguments into the negative and assisted Mr. Ley in becoming the best "demolisher" in the business. I was raging inwardly, but I was mocking him outwardly. I looked out at those 2000 laughing persons and realized for the first time the impossible task it would be to "prove" the flying saucers. One of those "proofs" was a bit of information I had that leads to the next point I want to make, and the next significant fact that I presented early in the flying saucer saga, which led, in part, to the enormous feud that erupted in both science fiction circles and UFO circles, and which came into direct conflict with such weighty persons as Dr. Hynek, and

even LIFE magazine, which devoted eight full pages in May, 1952 to the same sort of ridicule used by Dr. Ley, in attacking the Shaver Mystery, which was the real source of my early advent into the UFO field three years prior to Kenneth Arnold. It was through Mr. Shaver that I gained knowledge that such things as flying saucers existed, and HOW THEY FLEW, which I want to stress now as being extremely important. Mr. Ley, in his hilarious launching of a "saucer" into the air of an auditorium was unwittingly touching on the very crux of the situation.

I want to go next to an event which preceded the Chicago Debate. I want to go to the famous Maury Island incident at Tacoma, the subject of the first and only book I have ever written about flying saucers (co-authored with Kenneth Arnold, whose story it really is), THE COMING OF THE SAUCERS. I won't go into the story itself, only a single thing I said to Kenneth Arnold, to Fred Crisman (that redoubtable CIA agent who was so mysterious a presence in the flying saucer story, in the Shaver Mystery, and even subpoenaed in the trial of Clay Shaw by the New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison is relation to the assassination of John F. Kennedy), and to Captain E. J. Smith, United Airlines pilot who also saw flying saucers and joined Kenneth Arnold in his investigation at Maury Island which culminated in the death of two Air Force intelligence officers, Davidson and Brown.

It is what I said that is important, and one of the FACTS which make my own case so much stronger than any researcher to date (or in the future, I might add). I said two things: 1. Do not allow Davidson and Brown to fly back to Hamilton Air Force Base with the fragments of the flying saucer (?) they loaded onto their B-25 (with Arnold's personal help); and 2. No flying saucer would ever be captured, no spaceman ever presented, dead or alive, no bit of hardware ever produced as positive evidence of the existence of flying saucers. I also warned Kenneth Arnold not to fly his own plane back to Boise.

You all know what happened. Davidson and Brown were killed when one of their plane's motors burst into flame and the plane crashed against a mountainside near Kelso, Washington; Arnold himself crashed his own plane after refueling on the way home (he says he must have himself turned off the ignition on take-off at a height of fifty feet, because that's the way he found the switch after crawling from the

wreckage); and lastly it is still true that no flying saucer has ever been produced, or the wreckage of one, or any space being, dead or alive.

There is only one way such statements can be made, and this is the presumption that the person making the statements has to know the truth, be in possession of some knowledge which makes his statement reliable.

It was the STYMIE FACTOR that caused the deaths of Davidson and Brown. Because I was completely stymied in conveying a stronger warning to these men (due to the absolute certainty that my basis for the warning would be ridiculed, would bring forth the same wave of laughter that Willy Ley evinced from his audience) I could only make the unsubstantiated statement, and hope that they would accept it, or at the very least, institute extraordinary caution.

Later that night, when a shaken Kenneth Arnold called me from Tacoma telling me that Davidson and Brown had been killed, I made still another prediction that Kenneth refused completely to accept: I said none of the fragments he himself helped load on that B-25 would ever be found in the wreckage.

THEY NEVER WERE! And don't believe that the Air Force didn't sniff the very earth for hundreds of yards around in an attempt to find them.

I suppose you'd like to know how it came about that the fragments were never found? Once more I must invite your laughter, and invoke the stymie factor! It was because Colonel Sanders provided the fragments loaded on the plane which were simply fragments of slag he had picked up from the Tacoma smelter dump. (The real ones, originally sent to me by Harold Dahl and then in possession of Arnold and Smith at Tacoma were carefully directed elsewhere because they MIGHT be the real thing.) They were separated from the wreckage all right, and that successfully made liars out of Arnold, Smith and myself, leading also to Colonel Ruppelt's accusation in his Air Force-backed and financed book that the deaths of Davidson and Brown were the tragic, useless result of my despicable hoax in attempting to fabricate a sensational story for my magazine. He didn't mention my name, but I was the only "Chicago publisher" who could have been fabricating such a story. A second edition of his book saw the accusation carefully edited out---I might successfully have sued for defamation of character! Once more the Air Force had made valid its

statement that "there is no evidence that we are being visited from outer space by spacecraft."

At this point I would like to refer you to the stressing by the Air Force of the word "outer" in reference to the location of the presumed visitors from space. It is an important distinction and extremely significant.

It is very true that the flying saucers do not come from outer space, and the Air Force knows that. No way can they be tripped up by any "evidence" to the contrary. But the saucers (those UFOs whose identification has not been achieved by anybody) are SEEN in our atmosphere, and IF THEY EXIST, that is where they are, and what we have to prove in that case is WHAT they are!

Kenneth Arnold once theorized they were "living things" that inhabit our atmosphere and whose existence we have not suspected. He sent me an 8mm film which showed about 40 frames of what seemed to be "brown ducks" flying at some distance from his plane, but which he was sure weren't ducks.

I sent that film to Wright-Patterson Field (with a trap in mind---I would sacrifice the film as evidence). They kept it six months before returning it with the comment---we don't see any brown ducks. Which is what I had been waiting for: I screened the film and found instantly that the 40 frames had been cut out as I had anticipated and the film spliced together again. Obviously the Air Force didn't want to face the stymie factor, and be forced to explain the brown ducks or admit they were so incapable of protecting our national security in the skies that they couldn't even identify brown ducks, so they excised the ducks!

Can we fault them for that? I myself have been facing the stymie factor for thirty years. But it told me what I wanted to know---

the Air Force DID take the UFOs seriously! I felt sympathetically with them, knowing that somewhere there would inevitably be a Willy Ley with his crockery to make a mockery of them if they so much as hinted that they were only "believers" and not "scientific, factual researchers".

So much for the "secrecy" and "deceit" and what-have-you accusations against the Air Force and the "government". They are simply stymied and haven't got the stamina to admit it! It's pretty frustrating not to be able to lay your hands on all that visible hardware in the sky, with all the mighty power and implementation of the greatest war machine on earth at your disposal to make it possible to do so!

This brings me to 1944 and Richard Shaver. He was a Pennsylvania war plant welder who claimed to have spent eight years in huge caverns inside the earth, where lived a degenerate race of people left over as fugitives from a disaster that happened to the planet some 12,000 years ago (an eruption of intense radioactivity from the sun made life on the surface virtually impossible) called "dero" and "terro". Dero was a shortened term for "degenerated robot" and similarly, terro was a shortened term for an integrated robot. A robot is a slave, in this case slavery to mental degeneracy caused by radioactives lodged in the body, in bones and mind. Terros were better off because they had some facilities for removing some of the radioactivity from their bodies, or preventing initial contamination. Among the highly scientific mechanisms left to these people from a super civilization on the surface were what he called "rollats", or a sort of conveyance which traveled from cave to cave along tunnels hollowed out of the solid earth. They were a sort of anti-gravitational car shaped like a disc (saucer-shaped) which sped through the tunnels at great speed,

...SO I WORKED TWO HOURS TRYING TO REALIGN THAT OVERDRIVE TRIM THRUSTER AN' THE LITTLE GREEN MAN COULDN'T WAIT ANY MORE AN' JUST TOOK OFF.

I STILL HAVE HIS OWNERS MANUAL.



floating a foot or so off the floor of the tunnel. They were prevented from crashing into the walls or ceiling by guidance devices such as we use today in our Cruise missiles so disturbing to the Russians because they fly almost at ground level and follow the surface contour by means of sensing devices. These rollats could approach a right angle turn in a tunnel at full speed, and make an instantaneous turn to avoid a crash. Because inertia was nullified inside the rollat, the occupants were not crushed thereby against the sides of their vehicle. In their passage through the tunnels they seemed to skip along, weaving and bobbing to avoid irregularities in the tunnel walls.

These same craft could venture out on the surface of the planet, and fly along the ground just as our Cruise missiles do. They could not fly very high, nor into space. This sort of travel was reserved to actual space ships, such as the ships which carried the select ones of the threatened civilization to safety into space, while the abandoned ones (called abandondero) were left behind to become radioactive degenerates trapped in their underground burrows.

When Kenneth Arnold saw his "weaving, dipping" formation of discs, flying in single-file formation, Shaver called me excitedly and said there was my proof that he told the truth. Here was a convoy of "rollats" traversing the Cascades, following the contour of Mt. Rainier, weaving in and out among the peaks.

To say that I was doubtful is to say the very least. Yet, I had three years of Shaver's remarkable accounts behind me, including more than 50,000 letters from readers of AMAZING STORIES, claiming Shaver was telling the truth, and that, indeed, many of these people also been "in the caves". My skepticism was based on the fact that neither Shaver nor any of these 50,000 could give me an entrance into the caves, although Shaver (and some few others) could lead me to a hillside, and point to the "entrance" which was something like Sinbad's "open Sesame", which opened only on command from dero or zero instrumentation, but they could not actually take me inside.

I had long since ascertained that Shaver had NOT spent eight years in the caves, but instead eight years in the Ypsilanti State Hospital in Michigan as a paranoid schizophrenic. I had it first hand from the nurse who attended him, and was furnished hospital documents to substantiate it. Later, I found

printed hospital stationery used by inmates to write letters, among Shavers files which he opened to me. I never said anything to him about it, because I had made a sensational discovery, and didn't want him to clam up on me. He was providing me with great masses of scientific material which were not in any current textbook, and which I was comparing with another source I had come across.

When I was sure of myself, I confronted Shaver with it. I showed him the book OAHSPSE, which is an immense work written by automatic writing by a New York dentist named John Ballou Newbrough, which was stated to be a history of the Earth and of its heavens for the past 79,000 years. By "heavens", it was referring to our atmosphere. What fascinated me was two important similarities: the stories Shaver had been "copying" from the "thought records" of the caverns (broadcast to him via teltaug---telepathic augmentation---by friendly tero in the caves) were almost exact duplicates in an historical sense as the histories outlined in OAHSPSE (OAHSPSE means Earth, Sky and Spirit); and the science items related to me by Shaver, as existing in the caves, agreed remarkably with the science in OAHSPSE. I knew these to be valid in many respects because the book had been written in 1881, yet it was astoundingly correct in outlining discoveries made much later by modern physicists and astronomers. For example, it described interstellar features unknown in 1881, but announced as a new discovery as late as 1925.

I am going to ignore all of QAHSPSE except the point I wish to stress now, the strange motion of the flying saucers. In OAHSPSE, the atmosphere is inhabited, at different levels called "plateaus". Purportedly the inhabitants are the spirits of the dead. The evil ones occupying the lower plateaus, the good ones the higher (just as Shavers dero are in the deeper caverns, and the tero in the upper caverns). In order to connect the various plateaus with each other, "roadways" are constructed. It is along these roadways that traverse is made, specifically in "arrow ships", and a dozen different kinds of air and spacecraft. Many of them conformed to the observed shapes of UFO to an astounding degree.

Remarkably, the Frenchman Aimie Michel came up with a theory of his own, and wrote a book about it called THE STRAIGHT LINE MYSTERY in which he showed that when sightings are plotted, they reveal distinct

pathways, criss-crossing the planet in straight, intersecting lines.

I thought then of Shaver's tunnels, Michel's pathways, and OAHSPSE roadways. The trouble was that Shaver's were underground---until I learned differently! It came about when he told me that in the caves it was possible to see through solid rock for a distance of many miles with a simple flashlight! When asked to explain how this was possible, he merely became angry, and stated that he had seen it done, and that was that! Shaver had never been able to produce a dero or a tero, nor guide anyone into his caves, so I knew it wasn't inside the earth. A flashlight could penetrate the atmosphere for miles!

I learned then that Shaver's condition at Ypsilanti had been catatonic. According to psychiatrists, he had removed himself from reality, living in a shadowy imaginary world in his own mind. He even had to be fed. All his adventures in the caves were in his own mind. So they said.

To a spirit, the atmosphere would seem to be a solid---solid rock! Thus a flashlight would be an instrument capable of shining for miles through "solid rock". Shaver's rollats, Arnold's flying saucers, OAHSPSE's arrowships, all had the same environment, they traveled through tunnels from one inhabited area to the other. They all flew with the same skipping, swerving, bobbing motion.

I ascertained early that Shaver was totally unaware the book OAHSPSE had existed, so was not a source for his stories. At first he refused, because he didn't believe in spirits or life after death, but at last he consented to read the book. He agreed it was an accurate account of Earth's history, and he agreed with its science---but he said it had been written by Newbrough just as his stories had been written---by recording the histories transmitted to his mind by teltaug. There we were again---neither man authored his own works, both claimed that forces exterior to his own mind had simply dictated them.

What were those forces?

Now we come to a man named Grote Reber. Grote Reber was an electronics expert who lived in Wheaton, Illinois. Early in the '40s, he reported, via an article in the Chicago TRIBUNE, that he had been receiving intelligent signals from space, using a 30-foot homemade sheet metal radar dish erected in his back yard. For periods as long as eight hours each night he had been recording the mysterious signals, in some sort of

I AM NOT NOW
AND NEVER HAVE
BEEN!



dot-dash code, some of which was actually reproduced in the newspaper. From outer space, he said.

I went to visit him, but was refused admittance because he had already been swamped with callers who swarmed all over his property and pestered him to death. Instead I went to the back yard and inspected his "dish". It stood on concrete pillars 15 feet high, rotated north and south on very simple pins mounted in bearings. It could only be rotated in a north-south direction. Because the Earth rotates in an east-west direction, I knew instantly that Reber could not have picked up messages from any great distance, much less OUTER SPACE, or even the moon! He could not have focused on a distant source for more than a second or two! If he was getting intelligent messages, they HAD to come from a distance of less than 100 miles, or at the greatest stretching of logic, from several thousand, at a fixed location relative to Earth's rotation. There was nothing in that vicinity which could originate a signal! Nothing but empty air! No wonder Reber said it was from space! What else could he say? The stymie factor was in full operation. You can't point to empty air and say you are getting intelligent signals from it!

But strangely enough, the scientists of the United States government who could not possibly have

failed to note exactly what I had noted, the limited range of Reber's receiver, hired him to carry on his work and built a TEN MILLION DOLLAR receiver for him in Hawaii.

He is still there, listening in on "signals from space". His new instrument has a much greater range, and can also cover the entire hemisphere. It is also used in tracking satellites, as part of its work. It still listens to "signals", (the hissing of remote radio galaxies?) but we are never told what they say! Even if we were, would we believe that the "empty air" speaks to us?

Grote Reber is an early victim of the stymie factor. He is still a victim. But he has the consolation of knowing what the signals are, and perhaps (I say perhaps, but I really mean more) understands them. And if they are the same signals that Shaver received via "tel-aug", (and Newbrough via automatic writing) then indeed they are important, certainly worthy of the highest "top secret classification" that our government can give them.

Actually I have no interest in knowing what is in that top secret class, because it isn't a secret at all! Anybody who has a fractured skull, a strong electric shock, an injury to the spine, damage to the nerve system, or injury to the brain cortex, is susceptible to "hearing voices". Even a tooth filling can bring in radio signals (and I'm sure, other kinds of signals---tel-aug, for example?). Remember, I received more than 50,000 letters saying that the voices were real. I have interviewed, and even had weekly reports from, individuals who suffer from these "hallucinations", telling me WHAT the voices say. And what do they say? They say exactly what Shaver says the dero who "talk over their ray" to surface people say, and what OAHSPÉ says the "druga" (sic!), spirits of the dead, say to the living, mostly in dreams, but often in the awake state. And lastly, what the contactees of UFO say the occupants say to them!

Thirty years ago I said that the parapsychical was a proper term to use in describing flying saucers. I said that no metal machine would ever be captured, no flesh and blood space visitor would ever land on the White House lawn, and no shred of physical evidence would be unearthed to prove that the flying saucers actually existed. When Professor Hynek began his work, he was one of those who could not be approached by me, because of the stymie factor. But I dived my time, and it is with great satisfaction that I have seen

him make use of the term "parapsychical" and even "psychic". I have seen repeatedly in saucer magazines the admission that Ray Palmer had something, way back then, and was first to advance the theory that is becoming widely debated now.

And yet, the stymie factor has become even worse today! It is because I DON'T AGREE with any of the premises of those who are swinging over to the paranormal, psychic, spiritualistic, other-dimensional, sort of theory!

I am, and always have been, a strict materialist. Let me tell you why. If anything exists, it is REAL. And those investigators who are now talking about the paranormal are placing it in a limbo of the unreal, the phantasmic, the non-material. In their thinking there is no place for a single atom of matter---not even an atom of hydrogen.

Early in the '50s (perhaps late '40s) several Japanese scientists, physicists, came forward with a new theory of matter. They said that they were convinced there was such a thing as subatomic matter. They said it was thousands of times less dense than ordinary atomic matter. It was, they said, extremely finely divided---and instantly my mind leaped to the "science" that Shaver had been explaining to me so voluminously and explicitly.

This Japanese theory of subatomic matter was identical to Shaver's "exd" theory. He called it Ex-Dis-integrance. Radioactivity, he said, was the process of matter breaking down into its primal atoms, but "exd" was these primal atoms culminating in their most finely divided state, the basic matter of the entire universe, from which everything is made. Gravity, he said, was not a pull, an attraction of mass, but a push, a flowing inward toward matter of exd, which caused a friction on matter, and forced it toward the center. Exd swept in toward matter in an orbital spiral.

It entered the Earth primarily at the equator, varying in a lessening degree toward the poles, where it exited again. It is the friction of exd passing through our bodies which holds us on the surface of the Earth. It is also the friction of exd which determines the temperatures of our bodies. Science says our temperature is slowing down, over millions of years, and that someday life may cease because the narrow band of body temperature range in which it is possible for mammals to live will be too low and we will disappear as a species. It is strange that in 1881, OAHSPÉ said the same thing!

When I told Shaver of the fact that the Russians had claimed there was no gravity directly above the poles, he nodded casually. Of course, he said, that is why the space ships of the outer space people, the Titans, use the polar openings in the Earth's vortex to come down to the surface.

To get back to the Japanese, they described their subatomic matter in this way: Take a sphere of iron one inch in diameter. It may weigh a pound. You can hold it in your hand. It is composed of a specific number of iron atoms. These atoms are composed of electrons and protons arranged in a specific pattern (scientists have built models using ping-pong balls to illustrate the construction of an atom). But the actual particles are extremely tiny, and separated from each other by a relatively enormous volume of empty space. If you were to shoot a neutron through an atom, you might, in a million years, actually hit an electron and knock it out of the atom, thus transforming it into another type of matter, or even cause atomic disruption of the atom (an atomic explosion). But it would be like rolling a ping-pong ball haphazardly across a football field on which a half dozen marbles had been scattered, and expecting to hit one of them. It might take a million rolls to score a hit

Said the Japanese, imagine the iron atom remaining unchanged, in its prescribed relationship of electrons and protons, but multiply the empty space 1800 times. That is, remove each particle of the atom 1800 times further from each other particle, and you would have subatomic matter. To your comprehension, the sphere of iron would disappear. It would become even less discernable than thin air. You would wave your hand through it, and not even feel the sort of resistance that air offers to the passage of your hand. Yet, if the same amount of space was added to each atom in your own body, you would find yourself expanding to giant size, and as you did so, the iron sphere would once more appear, shrinking down to solidity and weight and visibility until it again rested in your palm. Thereupon you could throw this at a companion, who had expanded with you, and if thrown hard enough, you could kill him with it.

Relatively speaking, nothing would have changed. Matter would still be matter. But what would this greatly expanded matter be to those whom you left in their more condensed, or less empty space or-

iented environment? It would be non-existent. It would be invisible. It would be undetectable. It would be spirit as opposed to physical. It would be parapsychical. It would be psychic.

Some time ago, Crookes, an English scientist, who faced a stymie factor all of his own by advocating the existence of spirit and of life after death, placed a dying man, bed and all, on a scale. At the moment of death, the scale jumped up three ounces. From this he concluded that the dead man's spirit, which had now left the body, weighed three ounces. Assuming that this "spirit" remained the same "size" as the physical body it had left, we would have to place it in the classification of subatomic matter. But we would still have to call it matter!

Shaver, in his stories of the Titans, describes their giant stature. He describes them as being 30 feet tall, and claims that being immortal, and constantly growing, their size potential is limitless. The further out in space you find Titans, the bigger they are!

QAHSPÉ describes the human spirit, upon death, floating upward until it reaches a plateau where the densities equalize, and there the spirit finds himself on a solid world, with continents and seas, with breathable air, and with an entirely familiar environment. There he goes to school, continues to learn, continues to do, works, invents, composes, paints, builds. And with him, his civilization grows, becomes more advanced in every way, electronically, physically, chemically, mechanically.

He is able, if he wishes, to communicate with the living. Usually, however, the living are too "dense" to hear or see him. A sort of stymie factor all over again! Yet, there is in the world today, a tremendous movement toward paranorm-

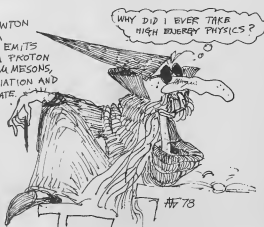
al things. There is a great belief in the psychic. The powers of the human mind are being explored, in such things as ESP, mental telepathy, precognition, and on and on. Even astronauts take seriously the prospect of developing an ability to communicate telepathically from space--astronay Mitchell is an example.

Flying saucers have been tracked on radar. What is it that is being tracked? Not a NOTHING! Not an empty void. No, they are tracking a substance which is capable of reflecting an electronic echo. Perhaps the same as the Japanese "subatomic" matter?

That is why I say I am a strict materialist. There is no need to imagine anything else--the conditions I have described are sufficient to account for everything. Why make a problem more complex by introducing an entirely unnecessary factor? The solution of a problem tends toward simplicity. If it gets more complex, you can be sure you are on the wrong track. Ideally speaking, the truth is a single unit. The flying saucers cannot be a multitude of things--they have to be a singular thing, although they may possess many facets. We have been looking at the facets, and have both failed and refused to see the thing in its entirety.

It is at this point that the stymie factor usually exercises its greatest influence--it is at this point that the audience to a debate, for example, or a speech, or even an article such as this, finds itself facing such a challenge to the sense of rightness of things that rejection takes place: the nuts and bolts UFO proponent is bolted down to his (absolutely lacking in evidence for 30 years!) position; the cultist won't give up his space people who will arrive to save him from atomic holocaust when the Russians attack us; the religionist won't

THE FIGNEWTON
ABSORBS A
MORON AND EMITS
A BOSON, A PROTON
TIMESONS, A MESONS,
GAMMA RADIATION AND
A BOSON'S MATE



concede that there might actually be some reality to his "heaven" and that rather than floating on a cloud to travel about after death, he would use an improved model, more exotic "taxicab" or even a "flying saucer"; the scientifically minded won't consider the "unproven" or the "documented", won't enter the area of philosophy, will shun with horror any hint of occultism; the military man won't aim his hardware at a phantom, nor admit that his atom bomb might not even annoy a UFO pilot. We could go on and on with the factions who react negatively to any concept that challenges their preconceived notions. Yet it is not at all true that I am advocating ANY of the concepts I have already advanced. I am not asking anyone to accept "spirits" or "life after death" or invisible "islands in the sky". I don't attempt to postulate other worlds existing in mysterious other dimensions, fourth or fifth or ninety-second. I don't point to such things as "vibrational levels" or "concentric spheres" of reality.

I don't ask you to believe anything. I do ask you to challenge everything.

Consider! What is it that you are asking me to accept? You are saying that there are space ships visiting the Earth in enormous numbers from super civilizations many light years away (a minimum of 4 and as many as thousands). You are asking me to believe that these machines have been visiting here for thousands of years, and yet have never dropped even one loose nut where we can pick it up and use it as proof. You are asking me to stretch credulity to the incredible point of accepting that in the immense numbers of possible star and planet systems in the total galaxy, literally thousands of separate civilizations concentrate their attention on the most insignificant and remote and even impossible to find speck of dust in the entire cosmos. You are asking me to locate the UFO anywhere but where they are actually seen---purely locally, in our own atmosphere, at the limited heights attained by our own aircraft.

Or---you are asking me to accept that the evidence of my own experience is nothing, that I am suffering from delusions, hallucinations, and am incapable of deciding that my own brain is functioning rationally. Renowned psychologists such as Carl Jung write books talking about group fantasies becoming common to all of us through a sort of universal mind, suggesting that there is no such thing as individuality. Thus do some of the religionists ask me to believe that my final goal is

giving up my identity and becoming "at one" with some hideous nothingness called Nirvana, where all progress ends because it IS the end. Or you are telling me that eclectic materialism is the only reality, and that each of us ceases to be at the moment of death, and that life is one vast futility, or the final ultimate of the stymie factor.

I exist, you exist, the flying saucers exist. But WHAT are all these things? That is all we should consider---our own reality, and our relationship to everything else that is real. Therefore, we must consider what there is about up to consider---and refuse to limit it to a physicality of matter that is limited to what we can touch, see, smell, hear and taste.

Let's use this super-civilization we are developing, our electronic instruments, our genius at research, our science, our past experience, and research the UFO problem from a realistic, materialistic stance, and find out what it is that we are talking about. We have enough investigators who have amassed thousands of clippings, thousands of reports of sightings, thousands of fuzzy photos of blobs of light and formless shapes in the sky; all of which accumulated junk is totally worthless. What has all this proved except what was positively determined in the very first few months of the flying saucer phenomenon---that there was something being seen that we could not identify---but was there whether we could explain it or not? Why should we have more of the same? Over the past 30 years I have published a tremendous mass of material in such magazines as FLYING SAUCERS, or SEARCH, or MYSTIC, or AMAZING STORIES (a fiction magazine). I have also made available countless books, such as QAHSP, THE SMOKY GOD, A JOURNEY TO THE EARTH'S INTERIOR, paranormal books, strange theories, mysterious experiences of all

sorts. All of them with a view toward providing material with which to stimulate thought that might result in some concrete conclusions, or lead to some productive research that might solve even the mystery of the UFO.

I have even delved into ancient history, mythology, legend and literature for clues.

And I have been totally stymied!

Now for the final touch! I'm going to paint myself with my own brush! I am one of the 50,000 who "has been there". Not really, not in Shaver's caves because my own interpretation of my experiences does not depend on Shaver's method, deduction. He heard voices, could not see anyone standing beside him to do the talking, on the surface of the Earth; he looked up and saw nothing but empty air; so he deduced that the only place left was down. Beneath his feet. Finally he had an experience, was led into dark caverns, met real live tero, flesh and blood like himself (when he pinched himself it hurt), and did not question the evidence of his senses although he KNEW that the eight years of his cavern experience coincided with the eight years of his of his incarceration at Ypsilanti. Even the hospital psychiatrists state that he was "out of his mind" (that his body was there, but the personality was not---it was somewhere in a different world which they could only call imaginary, because of their own personal stymie factor).

Occultists would say he was "out of his body", that he was an "astral traveler". It makes no difference what we call it---his was an experience as real and convincing as any saucer sighter, or that more mysterious personage, the "contactee" who claimed to have been taken aboard a space ship, gone to Venus or Mars or Saturn or whatever. (Witness Betty and Barney Hill, Adamski, and numer-



ous others.)

Yes, I've has similar experiences. But I have not been subjected to happenstance--I have learned to make these things happen to me deliberately. Do you want to call them self-induced delusions? Fine! That is what they are! That is the only available "textbook" definition of them. And that's where the stymie factor operates---the unwillingness to reduce the textbook factor to its proper status, 50% of definition, leaving us with 50% of non-definition. The other side of the coin. The second side to any question. The alternate. The other possibility.

During my life I have experienced hundreds of things like this, and I have published many of them. I will mention one or two now, at the risk of being repetitive, so that you will understand what it is that I am trying to convey, and that it has an equal basis in favor of its acceptability and its area of consideration.

In the past, many people have asked me what these things I am about to mention have to do with flying saucers. If we accept that flying saucers are what the general concept of them is, namely the idea that they are space visitors from other worlds, then of course none of this applies. But again, if we concede that, then the UFO problem becomes simply a matter of observation and record, until they eventually prove themselves by actually landing and confronting us, or one of them crashes and we can mount the saucer next to Lindy's Spirit of St. Louis. In which case why are we beating our brains out over UFOs---is there anything to investigate, anything we can do but keep an eye cocked aloft and be patient?

But if what I have outlined thus far is a viable concept, then the flying saucer phenomenon is a multifaceted thing, and is in fact the total reality of our planet and its inhabitants in all its complexity of existence. You cannot divorce flying saucers from politics, or Watergate, or wars, or the Kennedy assassination, or religion, or even the price of beans and spaghetti and hamburgers. We cannot differentiate between UFOs and occult phenomena, or precognition, or telekinesis, or astral travel, or mental telepathy, or the power to bed spoons with the mind, or the killer who runs amok for no reason at all or because God told him to do it! We cannot divorce them from such things as the Bermuda Triangle, holes at the poles, strange lights on the moon, comets or taffy candy. We cannot

set them apart from the ancient civilizations, such as Egypt, the Maya, China, the Middle Ages, because they were seen and recorded then also. We must consider the mysteries of lost races, the ruins of Stonehenge, Baalbeck, Tiahuanaco, the Carolines, the Great Pyramid of Gizeh and many others.

We must consider that the flying saucers are native to this planet. If we demand that they be alien, there is no longer any mystery---only the question of who they are and their intentions toward us.

Before I go into my personal experiences, let me mention a few significant statements attributed to important world personages: How many of you remember the time Winston Churchill met in London with Senator Wiley of Wisconsin, around the early '50s? Wiley came to tell Churchill of an amazing discovery, that there was evidence of something intelligent in our atmosphere, perhaps even of invisible "lands in the sky". Perhaps all of this is fiction from the typewriter of some facetious newsmen, but one thing is not---and that is something Churchill said to Wiley regarding death. He said, and I quote: "When I die, I would like to go further from Earth than 600 miles."

Think about that one for a while. What it says is that Churchill considered it possible that he would live after death, that he would go "away from the Earth" and that the distance was measurable. He could go 600 miles, which he did not prefer, or he could go further. Further seemed to be better than nearer. He actually placed the geographic area of the place we live after death as in our atmosphere!

Another great man, General MacArthur, made a speech in which he said: "We had better think seriously about uniting our armies and preparing to defend ourselves from invaders from space. The next war will be fought in space."

These were not his exact words, I want to point out, but that he feared alien invaders seemed to be true, and that he also was in possession of some sort of evidence to cause him to make this prediction seems also to be true.

Admiral Byrd, who made mysterious flights to both north and south poles, is said to have exclaimed that he wanted to see again "this mysterious enchanted land in the sky (beyond the pole)." He is also recorded as stating in a speech before departing for Antarctica on one expedition, that this was the

"most important expedition in the history of mankind!" I well remember the newsreel I saw in a theater after his flight to the north pole, which showed a terrain with lakes, trees, hills and valleys, but most astounding of all, a huge mammoth, lumbering along below the plane. I have the confirmation from many of my readers, the older ones, who remember seeing that same newsreel. It is not in existence any more, and the files of the newsreel (either Pathe or vitaphone) contain no such film today.

But enough of this sort of thing---I want merely to point out that famous people have entertained the belief that our planet holds mysteries that we can only describe as paranormal, paraphysical, and even occult. We have Churchill and Admiral Byrd both claiming "lands in the sky". We have a famed military man stating that there will be an invasion from somewhere other than the surface of our planet. We have a senator talking of intelligence somewhere in our atmosphere. And of course we have all the religions pointing upward as the location of heaven, or himmel, or paradise, or happy hunting grounds, but not being specific as to how far up. And ranging through all this, we have the UFO, zipping here and there, apparently by the thousands.

As a sort of aside thought, considering those who say the UFO are from outer space, other worlds, we recall the saucer sightings of such men as Scully, whose saucer occupants spoke Spanish, and the contactee whose UFO pilot spoke German. Scully's saucerers wore the clothing common in the Spain of 400 years ago. There are many stories from contactees and just sighters, who mention these "earthly" things, hardly applicable to visitors from outer space. As the computer would report: "It does not compute."

But in the language of QAIHSPE, the BIBLE, and ancient legend and mythology, it DOES compute! Yes, the saucers belong here, and they belong to all ages. But for some reason, in our present time period they are assuming gigantic proportions and importance, far more vital than in any past era in recorded history.

When we come to my own personal experiences, they are of two varieties---those experienced alone, and those in which other people played a part. Now that I have established that I regard the so-called paraphysical realms (which are variously termed "astral", "spirit world", "higher frequency realms", "different vibratory levels", "psychic

world", "planes of existence", etc.) as being just as physical as the condition in which we all exist at present, it should be easy for you to think of them all as "matter", as material as the bones in your head. And it should be easy also to think of them as existing in time, in geographic location, and interpenetrating each other (just as steam---the invisible superheated part---interpenetrates the atmosphere; or radio waves or radar or x-rays).

Perhaps the first example that is most pertinent to the flying saucer mystery is the classic (to me!) case of George Adamski. In 1943 he sent me a book manuscript which was a story of Jesus Christ coming to Earth in a space ship with a message of peace and hope for mankind. I rejected it because it was not a science fiction story suited to AMAZING STORIES, of which I was then the editor. In 1952 Adamski published that same book, almost word for word, with the exception of some added material that described how he and Williamson and several companions met and conversed with a Venusian in the desert (in 1952) and the changing of Jesus Christ to a Venusian, and the space ship to a UFO (specifically a mother ship and its "scouts"). George Adamski was actually a psychic. He possessed the ability to leave his body and travel astrally, and learned something vital to him. I say this because I am convinced of it, not because he or anyone else ever told me. He then got his message across, first attempting it in the guise of fiction, then as actual fact as a

flying saucer contactee (the first). I don't fault him for that. There isn't too much difference between him and Richard Shaver, and hundreds of other paranormal persons.

I have been a "dreamer" all my life. Sometimes it has been difficult, in consulting my memory, to sort out awake experiences from things that happened while asleep. Several times I have been embarrassed in recounting an experience, only to have the realization come to me that it hadn't actually happened, but was "only a dream". However, I learned to control my awareness in my dreams, and began to look for means of confirmation of the facts in a dream even while I was still asleep. Such things as asking others involved in the dream to suggest some proof that I could look for after awakening to prove that the dream was no figment of my subconscious imagination.

During the second World War, I had a number of significant "dreams". I came to realize that what was really happening was what the psychics chose to call astral travel. I would go places, witness events, and come back with a provable recollection of them. The most interesting was the battle of Savo Island, in the south Pacific. The morning after that battle, the Navy Department announced that we had lost five destroyers in a night encounter with the Japanese Royal Navy. I could confirm that, because I had dreamed it all---I seemed to be in a command center, somewhere in the war theater, and heard all the reports as they came in. Names of ships, number of men lost, details of the sinkings. But that morning, arriving at work, I found Howard Browne shaking his head in alarm over the account of the battle in the morning newspaper. He felt it tragic and dangerous that we had lost five destroyers. I asked him to get out a sheet of paper, then I dictated the names of additional ships sunk, number of men lost on each. I mentioned the MEMPHIS, the MILWAUKEE, the HORNET and others. Then I asked him to seal the sheet in an envelope and file it away for future reference.

Eight months later Secretary of the Navy Knox released the true losses in that battle, and explained that it had been kept secret because the Japanese fleet, had its admirals known our actual losses, would have known that there was nothing to prevent them from steaming on to Guadalcanal and sinking our troop transports waiting there, poised for the invasion of the Philippines. Had this happened, we might well have lost the war.

I asked Howard to open his envelope. He read off the names; I was 100% accurate in my list. All Howard did was to stare at the sheet, mutter: "Some kind of trick!" and after carefully tearing it into little bits, throw the paper into the wastebasket.

But I was there! No matter if you call it astral travel, clairaudience, precognition, mental telepathy---it makes no difference. It made me a believer in George Adamski. He had really been to a place he called "Venus" and talked to space people. Not the real Venus as we know today because space probes have been there and proved it not at all as Adamski describes, but a "material" place somewhere above the surface of the Earth, perhaps no more than a hundred (or Churchill's 600) miles up.

Another dream I had puzzled me. I found myself on a typical disc-shaped flying saucer, but it was different in one important aspect from the popularly described flying saucer. Later, when visited by two FBI agents in my office, they noted a plastic model on my desk, fashioned by Kenneth Arnold. All at once one of them leaned over, picked it up, turned it over and set it down again. "You've got it upsidedown," he said.

He was right! And once more a dream had proven itself.

Another dream concerned my brother, killed in Luxembourg during the war. It had bothered me, because I had to have the answer to several questions. One was, what about the money he had asked me to check on, which he'd given to his father, to give to his intended wife?

Another was how he had died. The War Department had given no information.

This was probably my first deliberate attempt at "astral travel". I asked (who? Shaver's "tero"?) to be taken to whatever place my brother was now, granting that there was life after death, so that I could find out from him what I wanted to know. Briefly, some hours after going to sleep, I was awakened by a "person" who said: "We are ready." Instantly I found myself standing in the morning sunlight (about 9 AM) on a dusty road, before a small "schoolhouse", made of simple poles, open on three sides, with rough wooden benches. Lined up in front of this primitive building were about 18 persons, male and female, of varying ages. One of them ran from the line toward me. It was my brother, dressed in khaki shirt and

FACE IT, FRED, IT
ISN'T WORKING OUT,
YOUR MEGALOMANIA
JUST DOESN'T INTER-
FACE WITH MY ACUTE
PARANOIA ANYMORE. I
MEAN... IT WAS FUN WHEN
THEY WERE AGAINST
US, BUT NOW, EVERYBODY
IS AGAINST YOU!



pants, and shoeless. He was delighted to see me, and wanted to play "tag". I was bewildered, but I did so for several minutes. Then I got his attention and asked about the money. He shrugged his shoulders, said it didn't matter--he said "Dad spent it." I asked him how he had died. He told me his left leg had been blown off at the hip while he was repairing a communications line under a barrage. Then we resumed playing tag until it seemed it was time to go. He again took his place in line before the school and I found myself back in bed, wide awake, my thoughts awirl. (Checking the time later I found that for Luxembourg, 9 AM was correct!)

More than a year later, after the war was over, the Catholic priest who had been with my brother when he died, visited my father, who then came to see me. As he gave me the Silver Star and the Purple Heart that had been awarded posthumously, he began to tell how Dave had died. But I interrupted and told him the complete details of the event. Bewildered, my father asked if the priest had visited me also. I said no, and to prove to him that I was telling the truth, I added: "Dave told me you spent the \$2000, but he says it is all right."

I have been in that "enchanted land in the sky" many times, I have seen and ridden in the flying saucers, I have talked first-hand with hundreds of departed friends and relatives, I have been given dozens of proofs, and I have wound up facing the most tremendous "stymie factor", the ridicule that has stymied many a UFO researcher. I understand fully why some researchers invent such "excuses" for clammung up and dropping out of research as "the men in black", the FBI, the CIA, or whatever evidence of paranoia you can suggest.

I will continue to be stymied until today's researchers abandon their silly collecting of newspaper clippings, interviewing saucer sighters, scoffing at contactees, staring out into space billions of miles and hundreds of light years, and instead begin to use the sophisticated

electronic hardware that our space age has generated, and begin to go after concrete MATERIAL facts in all the ranges of matter we already know exist beyond the SEEN, and in the far more potent and real realms of the UNSEEN.

The Wizard of Menlo Park is reputed to have spent some time working on a "telephone" to contact the dead. Whatever mystic bent suggested it, at least I think he was on the right track in turning to electronics and gadgetry to achieve his end.

There is no doubt that the UFO phenomenon is real. So let's define reality as material and begin searching with something other than our eyes and ears and nose. Next time you photograph a UFO, turn it over to a computer for enhancement, and maybe we'll finally get a picture as conclusive and convincing as the remarkable photos of Mars sent back by our Viking Landers and turned over to a computer that is neither schizophrenic nor imaginative nor a practical joker. If there is a subatomic universe, and it is adventuring into our universe, it might be a good idea to go at it with everything we've got.

Thus far, we've let the stymie factor lick us!

 ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 41

LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT

February, 1978

'On quite another topic, which may interest you personally--did you know that material that is judged obscene is unprotected by copyright law? I was talking to a publisher's lawyer recently, who told me that on the principle that the law will never protect an illegal act or institution or situation, copyright law will not protect a work that has been banned from sale--even if the ban is local, applied under the recent local-community-standards obscenity rules. So this means that if, say, MOUTH GIRL is judged obscene in Texas, anyone can immediately

pirate it, print a new edition and sell it anywhere in America, without owing Richard Geis a penny of royalties. An absurd situation, but one which a court recently upheld in a case where a movie had been pirated after some obscure judge in the Mid-West had found it obscene.'

(I suppose there may be a clipping service subscribed to by certain unethical publishers which would keep said publishers aware of which new titles are now available.

(It also strikes me that it is not beyond the realm of possibility for a publisher to instigate a local prosecution of a valuable book, with legal pirating in mind. A quid-pro-quo might be arranged easily with a small-town D.A. who had ambitions for higher office and would be amenable to the publicity such a prosecution would bring, plus the arranged subsequent monies that would be donated to his campaign. Not that I think MOUTH GIRL is a candidate for such a deal, but a textbook, perhaps which deals with sex...or a sexual reference work...)

'Personal news...I'm still working on a book about marriage' with my wife (we're hoping it will make us rich enough to buy furniture as well as pay the rent!) and am still the science fiction editor at Condor Books, for what that's worth. (It's not worth much in money, but I love the job.) Condor publishes four books a month, distributed nationally. It's growing. An ambitious enterprise, starting a mass-market paperback company from scratch, without much capital. There are only 4 full-time employees. But it seems to be working. I've found it hard to acquire good books for \$1250 a shot, and embarrassing as a writer to offer such meager money to other writers; but it's working out, and in a few more months there should be enough "cash flow" to allow larger advances.

'I offered to buy a whole-page advertisement (for Condor) in the Lunacon program booklet. But it seems the Lunacon people still remember the alleged role I had in the pieing of Ted White a couple of years ago. They didn't even answer my letter. Guess they don't want our money. Guess they don't want me to go to their convention either. Sniff.'

LETTER FROM DAINIS BISENIEKS

February, 1978

'In the Soviet Union they still claim the privilege of publishing



anything originally issued before the USSR signed the copyright agreement without so much as a by-your-leave. They will usually add a preface explaining that, in spite of certain errors, the author is a right-thinking person and an enemy of oppression as it is practiced in the capitalist world. The preface will, like as not, contain one outright lie. But I don't think the readers are entirely stupid.

'I can't wholly agree with Bob Shaw about style. Many kinds of stories are best told in unobtrusive styles, yes. There are books I have read and re-read (I couldn't have done so if they had been badly written) yet not a phrase echoes in my mind afterward. But in high fantasy, especially, words should have a music that carries meaning--sorrow or exaltation--as much as their lexical meaning does. It's like opera. I can remember passages of Tolkien, Eddison, Le Guin, Dunsany, Kenneth Morris; not Paul Anderson or C.S. Forester.'

LETTER FROM DAVID TAGGART February, 1978

'Too bad you missed seeing DAMNATION ALLEY in the theaters. There is one line in that movie that will make it unforgettable to anyone who has ever seen it: George Peppard announcing to Jan-Michael Vincent that "Salt Lake City is infested with killer cockroaches!"

'Paul McGuire is a good reviewer. I went right out and bought Anthony's A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON after reading his favorable review of it. Damned if he didn't tell me exactly why the book was good and why I'd like it.

'You think Elton Elliott read anything but the bacover before he reviewed Chalker's MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS. Or is it that, as I have long suspected, that former fans are exempted from such literary standards as character, plot, style, and coherence when they write?

'Added evidence that STAR WARS/CLOSE ENCOUNTERS have brought more money to the sf field: I was down watching TV in our company dayroom last week, when this book advertisement came on. I thought it was for some horror/satanist novel at first, but then they gave a few details of the plot, and I thought, hey, this is SF, and then I thought, hey, this sounds familiar, and then they flashed the title on the screen--Joe Haldeman's MINDBRIDGE.'

LETTER FROM BUZZ DIXON Mid-February, 1978

'Geez, you change format and directions for SFR like other people change their underwear.'

'((About once a year?))

'You've set a new mark, however; this is the first time anybody's changed direction in the middle of a zine.'

'((What do you think of the zig-zag this time?))

'Seriously, I'm looking forward to issue #25. Regardless of size, printing type, format, or whatever, SFR will always be one of my favorite science fiction fanzines. (Err, one thing, though, try not to change the size. My SFR collection already looks as if it has hiccups).

'Ever issue of SFR is a delight, #24 no exception. You've reached that rare plateau, Dick, where it's hard to tell which particular issue is better than any given other. The quality is so consistently high as to make minor differences virtually unnoticeable.'

'((Pfffffft.... But seriously, Buzz. I have never even been satisfied with an issue. Maybe with a ten thousand dollar budget....))

'Raleigh, N.C. passed a law making it illegal for a store to sell a "proponderance" of sexual material. The porno book stores promptly went out and bought copies of the GIRL SCOUT MANUAL, ten-year-old magazines, and Charles Dickens' works to sell alongside their regular titles. As long as the porno is 49% and the non-porno is 51% the law can't touch them.'

'((What would happen to a women's shop that specialized in sexy lingerie and bedwear?))

'Dino de Laurentis may have trouble getting FLASH GORDON off the ground. Filimation, a studio specializing in cartoons/live action TV for kids, has a two-hour FLASH GORDON animated film near completion. Filimation has done some incredible work in the field of TV animation, most notably the stunningly smooth animation of Tarzan and Batman on their TV shows, but they suffer from very bad stories and a dreadful lack of imagination. Dino probably couldn't get backers for his film since Filimation's FLASH GORDON will be out before he could begin production on his version (not to mention a sequel to FLESH GORDON which premiered at the recent Cannes film festival but hasn't reached the states yet).

'Kindly inform Karl Edd that a great many medical discoveries did have their roots in folk medicine. However, when (or if) my daughter gets chicken pox I'm not going to lie on the floor and let chickens run over her to lure the disease away. As Asimov pointed out (in regards to foxwort/digitalis) there are millions of folk cures, and the law of averages says some have to be right. (Some are dreadfully wrong, too. In medieval England diarrhea used to be "cured" by not giving the victim any food or water. And people wondered why they died by the thousands instead of getting better).'

'(Was that Cure one promoted and given by the then establishment physicians...or was it truly a folk cure? Folk medicine is usually accumulated knowledge of what works. The medical profession, on the contrary, down through the ages, has demonstrated remarkable stupidity and an affinity for fads and treatments based upon greed..))

'As to LUCIFER'S HAMMER being made into a movie, I doubt it. First of all, it isn't a hardcover best-seller. Second, there are several similar films already in planning, filming, or near completion. Warner Bros./Columbia has been looking into the possibility of combining Anthony Burgess' PUMA with a remake of WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE; George Pal is still trying to get NBC interested in a six-part mini-series based on H.G. Wells' IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET; meanwhile NBC has a two-part made-for-TV movie being filmed in Phoenix as I write this called A FIRE IN THE SKY (about a comet wiping out Phoenix) starring Robert Culp; and Warner Bros. is nearing completion on METEOR in which a 5-mile-wide asteroid breaks up and takes out large sections of Europe, Russia, Hong Kong, and New York. Starring Sean Connery, Natalie Wood and Karl Malden, directed by Ronald Neame from a script by Sterling Silliphant (the latter two being responsible for THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE, that most metaphysical of disaster movies) (and relax, METEOR is not being produced by Irwin Allen), the plot is based on actual NASA/DOD contingency plans for handling a large space object which appears to be on a collision course with Earth (something Niven and Pournelle forgot about or were ignorant of in their book).'

'((I wonder if there is a collective unconscious Signal in this spate of disaster entertainments...meaning that We sense a social/economic disaster coming, and these films are a surfacing of that presentiment?))

'Say, I like Neal Wilgus. Any-

body who can write a poem which still is funny, dirty, and about science fiction has something going for him. Of course, Neal will never be recognized as a poet in these modern times. For one thing his poem rhymes and is understandable. Worst of all, it's humorous.'

((True. And it is said that the last resort of the incompetent is free verse. God forbid that the basic appeal of poetry---the rhythm and rhyming---be honored and that poets learn that discipline.))

'I can't see how politics will affect one way or another the convention. After all, the early fans had a go around with communism and nothing happened there.'

((Politics was behind the famous "exclusion" at the first Worldcon.))

'And might not a Jehovah Witness fan protest Heinlein's blood drives on religious grounds?'

((Yes, a fan might.))

'Let Harlan have an opportunity to talk on ERA. Perhaps some sort of con watchdog should keep anti-ERA forces from heckling him at non-ERA related activities, but---

'I know, this is really ridiculous. Who really gives a rat's ass what a bunch of crazy "sci-fi" fans think? I'll bet the anti-ERA forces in Arizona don't even know there's a world con in Phoenix in 1978.'

((Well, let's hope you're right, Buzz.))

LETTER FROM GRANT CANFIELD

February 28, 1978

'I've made a serious mistake. The drawing I sent you which you used on page 51 of SFR #24 (Victorian bicycle/balloonist) should never have been sent out at all. It was a sketch leading up to the design of a logo for Pennyfarthing Press, a publishing venture of Michael Kurland, Alva Rogers and others. The final design was not exactly the same as this illo, but it was close enough to make the relationship obvious.

'My stupidity in sending out that illo was that publication of the logo--or near logo--could jeopardize Pennyfarthing's rights to that design. Fortunately, you protect all your contents in SFR assiduously with copyright, reassigned to contributors, so in this particular case no harm was done. But there could have been. So I apologize to Pennyfarthing for my negligence in this matter.'

LETTER FROM MICHAEL MOORCOCK

20th February, 1978

'Thanks for the latest issue which I was glad to get. I told Ian Cavell I didn't want any money but I'd be glad to have a few issues for a while, if that's O.K. Glad to see a cheerful letter from Fritz, whom, by the by, I praise a lot in my forthcoming critical book on heroic fantasy. To my mind he's the century's best (and last century's for that matter) and it's good to see his reputation growing all the time.'

LETTER FROM DON WOOD

21 February, 1978

'PERSONAL COMPUTING Magazine is actively looking for science fiction dealing with computers. We would greatly appreciate your publicizing PERSONAL COMPUTING to your readers as a market for SF. (We also publish non-fiction dealing with small home or business computers.)'

'Manuscripts (up to about 5,000 words) should be sent to Fiction Editor, PERSONAL COMPUTING, 1050 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA, 02215.'

LETTER FROM JOHN MILLARD

March 10, 1978

SEACON 79

37th World Science Fiction Convention
Brighton, England. 23-27 August, 1979

Agent in Canada

John Millard
18-86 Broadway Avenue
Toronto, Ontario, M4P 1T4

'You will note that this letter is on my agency letterhead for SEACON '79, the 1979 Worldcon. I would be pleased if you would put a note in the next issue that Canadians can purchase their Memberships from me in Canadian Dollars, but all Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to me, NOT to SEACON. The heading is a Rotsler design with all thanks to him.'



LETTER FROM LELAND SAPIRO

20 February, 1978

'I regret seeing the Roger Elwood controversy resurface again, if for no other reason than my having to say things I've already said 3 or 4 times in the fan press.'

'About a dozen RQ items--including two by Ms. Miesel--have been reprinted in books and promags without any fuss at all, since the mag gives reprint rights to anybody that asks--as you can verify from Alexei Panshin, Kris Neville, Jack Williamson, Dale Mullen, Tom Claeson, etc., etc. To spell it out, if a pro publisher sends me a release form I sign it, and if an amateur reprints something without asking permission, I cause no trouble. But Elwood was a pro who failed to ask, and hence in another category.'

'Concerning the letter (described in SFR) sent me by Ms. Miesel, I did exactly what she did with my last letter to her, i.e., I forwarded it to a lawyer. If she wishes, Ms. Miesel can regard this as a release of her RQ reprint rights or as a promise to sign any such release form sent me by a publisher. (If Ms. Miesel will re-read her own letter in Larry Downs' AY CHINGAR she'll understand why I want no direct communication with her.)'

'Again--to repeat the repetition--when I had that original threatening letter sent to Elwood I knew nothing of the standard indemnity clause, by which a publisher can sue if he is sued. Some SFR readers won't believe a fan editor could be so ignorant--but I was. This letter was the origin of the story circulated by Roger Elwood (and, I'm sorry to say, Sandra Miesel) that I was suing the article's author.'

'As Damon Knight wrote me, all this trouble would have been avoided if I had just had the courtesy to drop Ms. Miesel a line before communicating with Elwood--or if she had taken five minutes to notify me after selling him her article. But she didn't and I didn't...'

'I don't know why you think RQ is dead, since you're familiar with delayed fan schedules. Actually, mag was sent to press last week. I admit to saying the same thing about a year ago, but then I couldn't pay printing costs in advance and so had to ask for the magazine back. But SFR RQ subscribers should send me COA notices to insure getting this issue.'

AN INTERVIEW WITH URSULA K. LE GUIN

Conducted By

MARK P. HASELKORN



I have heard it said that many authors must wait until their deaths to achieve greatness since it is only after any potential disagreement from the authoritative voice of the creator is removed that the academician will go out on a limb with his "definitive" evaluations. As foolish as this statement sounds to those of us so wrapped up in popular culture, it nevertheless captures some of the trepidation with which I faced my conversation with today's first lady of science fiction and fantasy--Ursula K. LeGuin.

I am, after all, a newly minted Ph.D., fresh from the slightly cracked mold of academia, and for four years I had been involved with Mrs. LeGuin's work both as reader and teacher. This double role had given my trips to Gethen, Anarres and Urras, to Gont and Havnor, a double edge. On the one side, I had built up a system (doctoral work does that to one)--even once stating in a review of *THE DISPOSSESSED* that "LeGuin's philosophy...is a finely constructed mystical existentialism grounded firmly on basic human values". On the other side, I had always come away from her work with the profound feeling of having communed with a wonderful human being, an optimistic yet insightful, wise and natural woman. Now Ursula K. LeGuin was to be my first serious interview and, as I dialed the California number of her equally talented mother, Theodora Kroeber, both sides of my carefully constructed LeGuin world--the intellectual system and the "personal" relationship--suddenly seemed built on a foundation resembling that of the San Andreas fault.

Our talk began. In a search for stability, I grasped at the straw of my academic roots. "In *THE WIND'S TWELVE QUARTERS* you say, 'the progress of my style has been away from open romanticism' towards 'something harder, stronger and more complex'. Could you comment further on this direction?" "Not really. I don't really analyze my own writing. I've learned to write by writing and basically just write what I feel."

Ops. Her voice was warm and understanding but I felt myself pushing against a wall. Nevertheless I pushed on.

"You seem involved lately with the short story (her latest novel, *THE DISPOSSESSED*, was published in 1974) and *ORSINIAN TALES* both stylistically and thematically seems more realistic than your previous work. Is this part of the concrete direction and are you currently finding this form more fitting or fulfilling than the novel?" "No. *THE DISPOSSESSED* simply took a lot out of me and I haven't worked up the energy again for a larger work. In fact, the *ORSINIAN TALES* is a mixture of some older and some newer stories. I won't tell you which are which--I'll let you guess".

Stuck again. We continued to talk and time and again the message came across. Her human values were gut, based on life experience rather than some kind of system. She did not think of herself as a science fiction writer. Her writing came from inside; all the classifications were simply for the market, for the publisher who needed labels to sell the works. Even here her humanity and empathy came through--she did not resent this classification. Publishers were having a rough time too. In fact, she felt fortunate that the things she was interested in turned out to be marketable because they fit into the science fiction slot.

I felt something subtly changing within me--a shift in my attitude and role for this discussion. What was it? Mrs. LeGuin went on, telling me that she had been doing a lot of "existential soul-searching recently about her tendency to use male protagonists--Shevek, Ged, Gently Ai. Many women had questioned her about this and she was quite aware of the need for female characters

who do things since generally it is the male characters in novels who are the doers. She could not actually say she had so often had male doers, and added that her latest work, *THE EYE OF THE HERON*, (not yet published) does have a female protagonist.

Gradually it was dawning on me. We discussed how her most recent work, *VERY FAR AWAY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE* (Atheneum), was a further example of her writing being based on immediate interest. It is not science fiction; rather it is about two lovers in an unnamed city, which she revealed is actually Portland, Oregon (her home). This makes four universes in her work--the science fiction universe of *LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* and *THE DISPOSSESSED*, the Earth-Sea fantasy world, the imaginary European country of *ORSINIAN TALES*, and now a real city, Portland.

Then it finally struck home. She was talking about *STAR WARS* ("It's worth standing in line for. It's perfectly silly as far as plot goes--the plot is 1930's pulp, but that isn't what matters"), when I used the phrase, "sci-fi".

"Don't say sci-fi. That's a put-down word". I can still remember the sound, her voice lowering into an almost motherly tone of hurt and concern.

"Really, do you think so?"

"Everybody in the business does. It's science fiction or S.F...." Now I knew. She was no interviewee and I was no interviewer. Deep down I had known it all along--the intellectual, systematic side of my LeGuin world had been a reflection of

my life and situation, not hers. Her work was essentially concerned with two areas--the fulfillment of the self and the breaking down of the powerful barriers and walls (social, political and mental) that separate those selves. In talking to her, I too had suddenly broken down a wall--the barrier of my educational past. It was time to ask what really was on my mind--and to listen.

On the feminist urge to equalize for past injuries:

"This comes down to whether or not one is an activist in one's daily life. After all, whether I'm writing about the future or not, I'm using metaphors. In THE DISPOSSESSED, I present one world (Anarres) where the whole battle has been fought. It's over with, it's won, they're there and I don't have to worry about this. I would say that temperamentally the trouble with over-compensating to make up for past injustice--it's perfectly natural, it's perfectly human, it's inevitable--but it partakes of a kind of vengeance which I don't think gets any of us anywhere. You know, I've been stepped on for twenty years so now I'm going to step on you for twenty years. When people say that seriously, it strikes me as rather self-defeating".

On the other hand:

"There are some recent anthologies of feminist literature or feminist science fiction and the editor says, 'Now we'll have only women writing the stories!'. What's happened is that some men are taking female pen names. This strikes me as very funny and just sort of right...this is okay. Now you know what it's like. I don't think it does harm to anybody. That sort of compensation I think is great. The trouble is it sometimes gets mixed up with sheer vengeance and so you get self-destruction. It's very hard to generalize."

On her recurring use of "Scientist on the fringe" characters (Shevek, Guemnor in THE STARS BELOW, even Ged as wizard/scientist) and their relationship to the large questions of science and human values:

"Well, perhaps you should not take my scientists too seriously. I mean, you're quite right that Ged is the same type of person--they could just as well be artists. The fact is they are intellectuals on the fringe and whether they are doing science or art--you see it does not really matter to me--it is basically the same sort of job. They are intellectuals and they are creative people and they're not in step with their society. That is really what I am writing about."

But isn't the scientific fringe potentially more dangerous than the artistic intellectual fringe?

"Yes, except remember that I am of the generation that grew up with Robert Oppenheimer as one of the major scientific figures--the guy who was absolutely central to inventing the atomic bomb but who took moral responsibility for it--and the dilemma of people like Oppenheimer was something that I began to notice already as a teenager. It is one of the major moral dilemmas of our time, I think--the conscience of the scientist; also, the conscience of the artist. In this country it's easy to be an artist--you can say what you like. But if you are in Russia and you're writing stuff that doesn't quite agree with whatever the Socialist Realist line is at the moment, you are considered an extraordinarily dangerous person. It seems to me you're in the same boat. You're playing with fire, one way or the other, and I'm interested in these people who play with fire."

But again, isn't there something more irrevocable about the fire that the scientist is playing with as op-

posed to the intellectual fire that can be brought out into the open and talked about? Once you do your genetic research and create a mutant virus strain, we can't then talk about it....

"...or the atom bomb. Very recently, yes, but on the other hand, what about the artists in the 18th and 19th centuries who did precede the political thinkers, such as Marx. You can change the world that way too. You can change it and there's no going back. You get a few guys like Rousseau and you change the world as much as any geneticist could. You see it is the same question of responsibility. It is the responsibility of the creator."

What to do?

"Obviously, there is something wrong with the scientist who simply develops things as if he were a piece of machinery, but how are you going to solve the problem? You can not do it just by legislation, and a course in values is probably going to leave them sleeping quietly."

And your work as a step towards dealing with this problem?

"I think that what anybody in a position of responsibility, whether it is political or scientific or artistic or simply familial (--what they need, what we need) to take the word from feminism, is to have our consciousness raised. So many artists and scientists are not even aware that there is a problem and, of course, that's the dangerous thing. Or they shut their eyes. This is certainly one of the functions of all art-fiction, poetry, painting, music, whatever else--it sharpens one's consciousness and, therefore, also one's conscience. You get so you don't take these things for granted any more".

Then your work isn't a conscious preaching?

"My work has recently gotten a little too far in that direction. I hope it won't do that again. I don't like preachy works."

So you're just writing what's inside?

"That's what I have always done --always, right from the start. And I just happened to be very lucky to have fallen into the science fiction pigeonhole. So they knew what they wanted to call me, so I got published."

Yet the content of your work is so topical--even faddish:

"After all, if you're just writing out of what you want to write--of course you're interested, if you're anything like an ordinary person, which I am--you're interested in what everyone else is interest-



ed in, so it comes out sort of topical-like. And whether it's the Viet Nam war or whatever, that's what's obsessing us all at the moment, so that's what you write about. This doesn't happen to the very great artists--the real top-flight guys are sort of beyond that. But I'm sort of ordinary."

Ordinary? No, and recently?

"I just got through my first time teaching a seminar in contemporary science fiction novels at UC at San Diego. That was really exciting. I teach writing workshops but I have never taught science fiction courses, so we did this seminar and those kids were terrific. Did I learn a lot. I think it was a big fake because I didn't teach them anything."

It must be wonderful to feel you have made your place in the world simply by being yourself:

"Boy, like I should be down on my knees thanking God."

No, we should, for what surer sign of greatness could there be than the increased awareness of self and society one experiences in reading or talking to Ursula K. LeGuin.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 71

LETTER FROM AMY FALKOWITZ

February, 1978

"The one thing I think I really enjoyed the most this issue was the interview with Bob Shaw. Somehow this was one of the most coherent and interesting interviews you've ever run, and I applaud you for it. I found that somehow Bob came across as serious and sincere in his answers to the interviewer. Maybe it was just that Mr. Covell asked the right questions. But I found the interview highly readable, informative and thoughtful. Some of the people you have interviewed have seemed to be putting on a show--not giving honest answers, kidding around, as if they maybe had nothing important to say or felt "why should I bother?" Shaw seemed to be just the opposite--he seemed to care about what the interviewer was asking, and seemed to want to say honest answers. And I have to cheer his answer to "serious purpose"--the idea of having a brain and an imagination--and that it's criminal not to use it. Thanks for a really worthwhile interview."

"I have one comment on Paul McGuire III's review of MZB's THE FORBIDDEN TOWER. (I am a DARKOVER fan--a "Friend of Darkover"--I attend the

meetings, readings, parties, etc. that are held in Berkeley--otherwise known as "Berzerkery" at Greyhavens--we've got another one this weekend. Randall Garrett is doing a reading of his new story, "The Horror Out of Time", which will be in an upcoming F&SF.) I'm pleased to see he gave it a good review, and most of his comments are good--and I agree with them. But there is one criticism of the book I have to make. It is a very long book (the later DARKOVER novels seem to be getting longer and longer). Part of the reason it is so long is that MZB seems to have run into a problem with her writing--there really is so much the readers want in detail on DARKOVER and so much she has to tell--including, perhaps, telling it to order the ideas in her own mind. She gets somewhat bogged down with detail--it's almost as if she can't decide between plotting and putting in all the background details, dealing especially with such things as laran--the telepathic and other "psi" gifts of the Darkovans. This book really does a lot with this, and it does almost interfere with the story that is happening. And I think MZB is a superb storyteller. At the last event at Greyhavens that I attended, she read, among other things, a segment of STORM QUEEN, the next major Darkover novel which takes place during the Ages of Chaos--if the segment is a valid example, that is going to be one heckuva good book!) Anyway, FORBIDDEN TOWER suffers from a certain amount of overwriting--such faults as too much detail, characters repeating themselves almost word for word, in two very different sections of the book, and then a rather too-fast ending, as if MZB suddenly realized she'd gone on for almost two hundred pages of detail and had only around 100 left to actually tell her tale and wind it up. Even with these flaws, though, it is a good book."

LETTER FROM RICHARD E. GEIS TO MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

February, 1978

"Enclosed is part of a letter; the marked parts I intend to print in the next issue of SFR. Do you have any comment? The tendencies and problems she discusses are real--as Phil Farmer demonstrated recently with THE DARK DESIGN. Do you feel you are falling into a subtle trap?"

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY REPLIES February, 1978

"Actually I don't see it as a problem--most of my readers complain because the books aren't long enough, not because they are too long. As for detail, this is what most readers feel that they want--at least the ones from whom I get any feedback."

"I'm sure that if I ever get too self-indulgently bogged down in writing for myself and for my few rabid fans, Wohlheim--who is an old pro and very keenly attuned to marketplace values--will let me know about it without pussyfooting. Actually I think I am myself too old a pro for that. I write much MORE detailed stuff for myself--she should ask one of my intimates who has read QUADRILLE, the soap-operalike novel which I wrote for myself before making it into an adventure story for the publishers. If some people feel this is too much detail, well, that is a matter of taste--one can't please everybody and I long ago decided to please, in this order, myself, my publisher, and my fans. As for the superfast windup, well, ever since BLOODY SUN, readers have been commenting about this in my books--one person put it well: "I felt it would take her two hundred pages to untangle all these complications, and yet, looking, I could see there were only about thirty pages left. Yet she made it work..." When I am plotting, I try to plot a complex knot that will come untied with one enormous yank on the threads. Obviously I can't always succeed. But one writes largely as one must, and provided my publisher and my fans continue to pay for the so doing, I shall continue to please myself. When sales figures prove I am going in the wrong direction, then I shall probably move back to less detail, but FORBIDDEN TOWER has outsold everything else I have ever written, and sold out its first printing in two months, so I must be doing something right. I like Amy and I am not indifferent to her criticism, but if I listened to everybody I would never get any writing done. Maybe my next book will please her more."

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 94



SF, Fantasy and Horror Film News

BY BILL WARREN

When Dick Geis asked me to do this column, he said he wanted news. This isn't always easy to come by; oh, I could go through issues of HOLLYWOOD REPORTER and DAILY VARIETY --and I have--but the best news comes from people in the movie business I run into from time to time. Like John Landis. John's one of those people I met through Forry Ackerman; he directed (and played) SCHLOCK, and more recently directed THE KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE. He just finished NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE which is due out in August. He's pleased with it. It was shot on location in Eugene, Oregon, but is inexplicably set on the East coast. John's always full of news, and this time it was about himself.

He's signed a contract with Universal to direct a 10 million dollar version of A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT, which he promises will be faithful to the book. He's also doing another fantastic film for the same budget, but other than its being shot in England, he wouldn't say any more about it.

He did say that he signed Rick Baker, the young makeup master, to work on the year-and-a-half project for its duration. I hope this makes up for Baker's losing the job to do the incredibly elaborate makeups required for LORD GREYSTOKE, the faithful-to-the-book version of TARZAN OF THE APES. Carlo Rambaldi, who created the awful giant robot ape in De Laurentiis' KING KONG, got that contract; this is not a hopeful sign. (Rick played KONG in almost every shot.)

Frank Langella is going to repeat his stage success in a new, lavishly-produced version of DRACULA to be directed by John Badham. I hope it's as good as the recent three-part serialization of the novel shown on PBS, with Louis Jourdan as the Count. I thought that was excellent.

Some people have hinted that AIP's production of METEOR is something of a ripoff from Niven and Pournelle's LUCIFER'S HAMMER (also scheduled for filming), but METEOR

was announced long before the novel was published. It's simply a coincidence. Not so coincidental, however, is the in-production TV movie, A FIRE IN THE SKY, in which a comet hits Phoenix. It's based on a Paul Gallico short story, but like so many TV movies, is obviously being made in hope of cashing in on METEOR's expected big profits.

Among feature-length cartoons in various stages of production are Bakshi's LORD OF THE RINGS, as well as two from Disney, THE FOX AND THE HOUND and THE BLACK CAULDRON, an utterly different sort of thing for the studio. I've also heard that a feature cartoon of DRACULA, with a storyboard by Frank Frazetta, is in production, but this may have been scrapped.

Gene Corman (Roger's brother) announced he was going to film Ray Bradbury's play LEVIATHAN, but I doubt that this will get off the ground. Stanley Kubrick returns to fantasy with a film of THE SHINING, based on Steven King's mostly-good novel. An odd item is THE CHOSEN (ex HOLOCAUST 2000), already completed and about to be released with a new ending; it's an amalgam of science fiction and occult horror, and stars Kirk Douglas and Simon Ward. Also POPEYE, a live-action musical to star Dustin Hoffman as Popeye and Lily Tomlin as Olive Oyl. This is not a joke.

Asimov's THE NAKED SUN starts shooting soon; I wonder if this will mean the reactivation of the dormant CAVES OF STEEL project? That was announced some time ago and was to have starred Paul Newman and Jack Nicholson (Peter Cushing starred in the BBC-TV version). Harlan Ellison says he's basing his script of I, ROBOT on the structure of CITIZEN KANE. If De Palma's THE FURY turns out to be profitable, he will probably finally film his long-delayed version of THE DEMOLISHED MAN. I hope he doesn't use the terrible script Fox had a few years ago

Naturally, we shall soon be deluged with imitations of STAR WARS, and we haven't even begun to really hear about them. There's SPACE PROBE, THE EYES BEHIND THE STARS, STRATOSTARS, KING ARTHUR AND THE ASTRONAUT, SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN SPACE DWARFS (Disney, no less), OVERLORDS, WAR IN SPACE, RISE AND FALL OF THE GALAXY EMPIRE, FLASH GORDON and BUCK ROGERS, as well as the sequels to STAR WARS itself. Leigh Brackett's script is to be directed by Irvin Kershner, who has mostly directed comedy-dramas like THE FLIM FLAM MAN, THE LUCK OF GINGER COFFEY and A FINE MADNESS; I suppose he's expected to give dimension to the characters. The effects for the next two STAR WARS pictures are expected to be filmed simultaneously.

AIP is nearing completion on STARCRAH, the first STAR WARS real ripoff to be released (unless TV's GALACTICA comes along first). I've seen some stills and they look promising; you can often tell a lot about science fiction and horror movies from stills, but since this is mostly an Italian picture and their effects men are sloppy as hell, this may be a stinker. Marjoe Gortner is the star.

Ah, but the most interesting STAR WARS ripoff died aborning. Most interesting--not most promising. For one brief, giddy moment, Roger Corman announced to his staff that they would do their own version (SPACE CHRONICLES was the planned title) and for a while he tried to find some little boy who could build models to make some for his movie. He decided the \$500 he budgeted for model work would be a lot of money to a little boy. He was going to have a dirt planet--Vasquez Rocks and Bronson Caverns--as well as a water planet--Beach Dickerson's swimming pool. However, cooler heads prevailed and the project was dropped.

Now that I am a Real Movie Reviewer, having been quoted in the rerelease ads for PHANTOM OF THE

STEVE MCQUEEN'S STAR WARS HIT SO BIG WE HAVE A 20 MIL BUDGET FOR... GET THIS... THE RETURN OF THE BLOB!



PARADISE a year ago, I've been getting invited to advance screenings. By the time you read this, some of these will have been released. I suspect a couple may never be released, but, by god, they do exist. I saw them.

Among these phantoms is PLANET OF THE DINOSAURS. This looks like it was made by ambitious STAR TREK fans who hired Ray Harryhausen buffs to do the effects. A tritely ill Assorted Group crashlands on a primitive planet and they have to battle dinosaurs to survive. The biggest surprise is that the planet does not turn out to be Earth. The dinosaurs are beautifully sculpted, and they do move rather energetically. Not all of them are believable, however (some move wrong, some seem too light) and the blending of live-action and effects is variable. The film is painfully amateurish in writing, acting and directing, and is also rather dull. I suspect it may never see the light of day. In a way, that's too bad, because a lot of reasonably talented people struggled to put it together.

FOES is about the Close Encounter (not a ripoff of that, though) that some people on a small island have with what looks like a stainless steel flying saucer. There's a virtue to the film, though it's not easy to spot: The human beings don't ever know what's going on, which seemed credible to me. The effects are mostly poor and the aliens are unconvincing towers of light. The film is excruciatingly dull and banal and I cannot imagine a distributor picking up a film of this nature that is so totally lacking in anything really interesting.

THE MANITOU is something else. Wow, is it something else. Basically, I loved it. On one level it's a predictable imitation of THE EXORCIST, the plot structure is damned near identical to that of Blatty's novel, but the treatment by director William Girdler makes it something altogether different. I could hedge my bets and say it's a dumb but entertaining movie, but that isn't fair to the film. The plotline is silly, that's for sure: An ancient American Indian medicine man is physically reborn on Susan Strasberg's back. Tony Curtis plays her spiritualistic charlatan boyfriend, and Michael Ansara is a contemporary Indian medicine man.

It's not a perfect film; far from it. It takes almost too long to get going and the director's habit of panning down or across something to introduce scenes is tiresome. There's a pointless absence of San Francisco location sce-

enes, and while the production design is excellent, some of the set dressing is unconvincing. But from the point at which a gleaming black head emerges from a tabletop, the film takes off with a whoop and does not slow down until the extravagant, exuberant climax.

The film is as brisk and breezy as anything I've seen in quite a while, and it's simultaneously scary and funny. The latter two characteristics are, to me, very important. Too often the makers of horror movies are reluctant to include comedy in their product, apparently fearing that once the audience starts laughing at the right things, they'll keep on laughing at the wrong things. (THE EXORCIST is a case in point; it scrupulously avoids having humor occur near the elements of horror, resulting in a film almost totally devoid of humor, and one that's largely dull. THE MANITOU is anything but dull.)

I think this policy is shortsighted. Horror movies always teeter on the edge of humor since, after all, they deal in such outlandish topics. The real trick is to use the horror and the humor to support each other. They can occur in the same scene, but the element of horror must be treated seriously in and of itself. The figure of menace can even be funny as long as it always remains a figure of menace. In THE MANITOU, you're always kept off-balance by the humor and the horror is vivid and imaginative enough to function as it should.

Something that appealed to me very much was that the film seems basically American in tone. Almost all horror movies are European in their sensibilities; they are derived either from the Germanic school of the 1920s or from the Hammer films of the late 1950s. The vastly-overrated EXORCIST is just a big Hammer movie. THE MANITOU, on the other hand, is quintessentially American in all feelings and surface details; it's set in Frisco, the most American of all cities and the star is ultraYank Tony Curtis. The approach is also utterly American. It's brash, confident, smart but not intellectual, and unafraid of its effects. It does not overreach, it does not pummel the audience. If you give the picture a chance, it will eventually catch hold of you; it's a very likeable film, rather like Tony Curtis himself. And the climax is so outrageously cheeky, so naked in its swiping from other source, and has such a stunning--er--set, that I was in a state of constant delight, clutching my head, bouncing up and down and giggling

like a fiend at the brassy daring shown.

It's scary in spots. Girdler really knew how to do sudden shocks. Even if he can't build scenes to climaxes and had no clear idea about where to point his camera, he sure as hell knew how to knock you temporarily out of your seat. There are three or four such shocks in the film, and there have been directors (William Castle, for one) who did not manage to come up with that many in a full career of trying.

THE EXORCIST tried so hard to validate itself intellectually, to prove that it was more than a mere, common horror movie, that it was an Art Film just like them guys make over in Yoorup, that it became dull, hyper-serious, solemn. It wasn't fun on any level; it was oppressive and brutal, trying too hard, as if seriousness equals Art. THE MANITOU, thank heaven, has no artistic pretensions whatsoever. It's not spooky, it's not a comedy--it's a straight horror film with some comedy in it. There's the real threat of death (and worse) hanging over the characters in the film, and the penalty of failing to wipe out the mean, chuckling old evil spirit is too awful to contemplate. Great fun. Please see it.

I could go on at great length about THE MANITOU. It's one of the most entertaining pictures I've seen in a while and it saddened me considerably to learn that the director, a man who had made only junk until this film, was killed in a helicopter crash not long after finishing it.

I've been very interested in the odd career of Brian De Palma. He made some strange independent pictures in the 1960s and later established something of a reputation with GREETINGS and HI MOM. After some abortive attempts to crack the big time, he made what has become one of my favorite movies, PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE; this also didn't do well, though it has a cult following. After that, he made OBSESSION and CARRIE in quick succession; the former did reasonably well, and the latter took off like a rocket. De Palma had Done Arrived. So 20th Fox gave him John Farris' script of his novel THE FURY, a moderate star-name cast (Kirk Douglas, John Cassavetes), and a big budget and told him to go ahead. Unfortunately he did.

Overall, the film is pretty bad, despite having some good sequences within it. De Palma himself did his work well enough, despite too much moving camera, but he is trapped by a bizarre Sci-Fi treat-

ment of ESP. The actors look lost, and there are so many leads we don't know who's important. At the end, the last survivor (Amy Irving, Steven Spielberg's current girlfriend) seems to have been left alive mostly by chance.

Farris has no idea of structure or shape to a plot. Things proceed in fits and starts, or at least seem to. At the end of the film, you're suddenly aware that actually, despite many events, nothing has happened--you're still at square one. The events weren't leading to anything, except perhaps John Cassavetes' death, certainly the most spectacular death scene in movies. (He extravagantly and messily explodes.) Quite unlike De Palma's other thrillers, there is no resolution whatsoever. Almost all the important cast members are dead, so the film simply stops; we cannot speculate as to what is going to happen to the survivors (nor are we made to want to), since the information we have is skimpy and confusing. (Why did her eyes glow blue?)

ESP is used in such a confusing fashion that it becomes clear the writer believes it's shorthand for Miracle. The girl and the boy in the film are supposedly equal in ability, but we certainly can't tell what those abilities amount to. Telekinesis? Well, yes, sometimes--but at the end, though the boy has learned to levitate himself, he falls to his death.

We can see, time and again, what De Palma was getting at, but the shapeless script and inconsistencies prevented him from bringing anything across. I hope that he gets a better script next time. I'm completely convinced he's a fine director for this genre.

At the same time this film is coming out, Disney is releasing RETURN FROM WITCH MOUNTAIN, a satisfactory sequel to ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN, which also involves kids with ESP powers. This time, the alien boy has been kidnapped by bad-dies Christopher Lee and Bette Davis (Bette Davis?!) and is employed in a scheme to hopefully conquer the world. The plot is as shapeless as that of THE FURY, but it's more entertaining and satisfying. The film has a bit more vinegar to it than Disney films of the past and involves some real villainy and threats of death. Children should have a wonderful time; I enjoyed it myself.

As I said, I think De Palma is a fine director of fantasy. But then again, I was convinced for a long time that George A. Romero was a rotten director for the same genre.

Romero's big hit was NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, a picture I thought had no virtues beyond being malevolently relentless. It made a ton of money, and Romero has recently made a sequel (DAWN OF THE LIVING DEAD), but his next three after NOTL, THERE'S ALWAYS VANILLA, THE CRAZIES and JACK'S WIFE got no distribution and so died. He went back to directing TV commercials and documentaries, but apparently couldn't stay away from the Big Screen.

In 1967, he made a film called MARTIN; until now, it has gone without a distributor and to a certain degree, I can see why. It's about a modern-day, essentially rationalistic vampire and is moody, intellectual and amusing. It's certainly not your standard gore opera, and it's hard to imagine what kind of ad campaign would lure in the audiences that would like the film. I hope something can be done, because I think it's excellent. I was quite surprised by this high quality, expecting nothing but the worst from Romero.

There are flaws to the film; there's a terrible musical score, obnoxious and depressing and the film is almost as shapeless as THE FURY. There's no progression to the events, and no sense of culmination or climax; like THE FURY, it just ends, though much more satisfyingly. But the bits and pieces that make up the film, including the writing, acting and directing, are so engrossing, expert and entertaining in a ghastly way that the film is a success.

Romero had the amazing audacity to create an entirely new mythology for vampires, which strips away all the elements of superstition (an idea constantly reinforced in the film) except, perhaps, longevity. I say perhaps because though Martin appears to be around 20, he claims to be 84. He occasionally gets the shakes and has to drink blood, which he obtains almost like a rapist, drugging his victims, then drinking their blood from cut wrists. He also generally has sex with them while they are drugged. He is treated sympathetically. I said this is an unusual film.

In the film, Martin has come to a dying Pennsylvania town to live with his arrogant, elderly cousin, Cuda, who has decided to save his soul and then kill him. Martin is apparently passed around from relative to relative like a hot potato; he refuses to be institutionalized. Martin is slightly retarded, except when it comes to acquiring blood, when he becomes a cunning predator.

He is also, as I said, sexually retarded; until the time shown in the film, he's never had sex with an "awake" person, which suggests necrophilia in a nicely nasty way.

The film deals with Martin's life in the town and with his relationship with his relatives and with the lonely housewife who seduces him. She has mistaken his stupidity and shyness for gentleness and he appreciates this; he has no thought of drinking her blood. Occasionally, he phones a call-in radio show and talks with the scoffing host. Other than this, and other than the related sub-plot of the rebellion of Cuda's granddaughter, there's no structure to the film. It doesn't point toward a climax and the film meanders. It does not stroll, however.

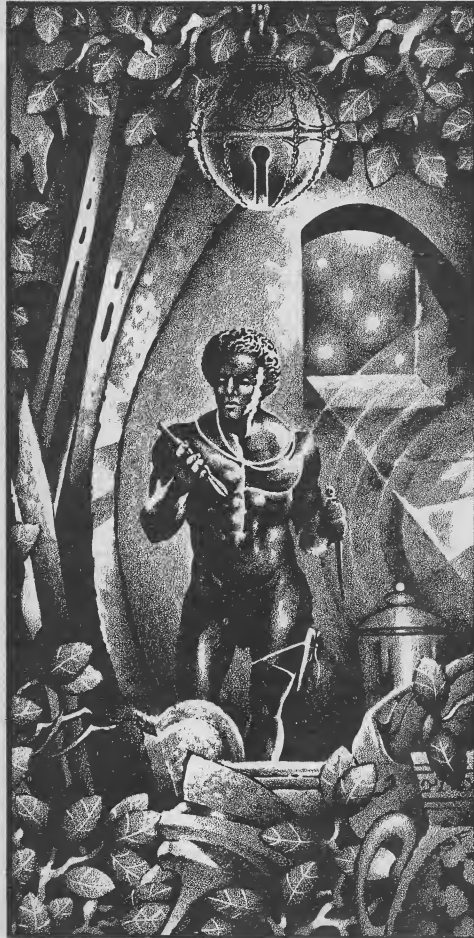
There's one sequence, so nearly set-piece that it made me think that it was the justification for the whole picture; it's nothing less than stunning. Martin has chosen a new victim, whose husband is out of town; he sneaks into her house, makes his preparations, and bursts into her room--to discover her naked in bed with a stranger. What follows is funny, exciting, surprising and terrifying. A brilliant scene.

John Amplas plays Martin, and this is apparently his first film role. He's slender and childish-looking, with a vapid expression that makes you realize why no one outside his family could possibly suspect him of being a murdering vampire.

Occasionally, we get hints that Martin is as old as he claims, because there are (too many) black-and-white scenes showing Martin in period costume being chased by men with torches. These scenes should be diminished.

Romero (who has a perfectly-acted cameo as a worldly priest) seems to have intended some sort of correlation between the degeneracy of Martin and the degeneration of the Pennsylvania town. They both seem to be in a kind of twilight phase, the autumn of their lives. This is made clearest in another exciting sequence, in which Martin pursued by police, runs into the middle of some sort of criminal confab--followed by the cops. There's a violent shootout, and the frightened Martin, who started it all, is the sole survivor!

I don't know if this film will be released, and it's certainly not to everyone's taste (it's very gory for one thing), but it's an audacious experiment that shouldn't go unseen. I liked it and was deeply impressed.



ONE IMMORTAL MAN

A SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

BY RICHARD E. GEIS

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Vik Kunzar winced at the sudden, stabbing, alarm pain in the tip of his middle finger, left hand.

He slid his big black arm away from the naked brown body of the young Empress Punia, automatically damping the nerve response. The pain was intrusive and important. It would flare again in a few seconds, but muted.

He shifted to the edge of the oval, spongy, purplish plant that had been genetically adapted to serve as a bed.

She opened wide, dark eyes. "What's the matter?"

His fingertip pulsed again. It contained a microreceiver, set in bone, connected to a nerve.

He padded, naked, across the golden carpet of fuzzy, intertwined hairlike tendrils that sprouted from the floor. Slipping on his white leafcloth toga he positioned its suckers in his armpits. The living cloth glowed with life.

He said, "I have something important to do. I'm sorry."

Punia sat up. "I arranged to be free until dawn." She was petulant, feeling cheated. She smiled the small, superior smile of the young and eager. "Are you feeling your age, Masil?"

Vik reflectively glanced at himself in the nearest mirror. His ebony face was lined. His kinky hair showed many, many coils of white. It was convincing.

"Government business." He picked up her garments from a gourdchair and took them to her. He leaned over and kissed her. "Next time I'll wear your yoni smooth."

He meant it. Punia was like a younger man...or like you! But...he told me you're seventy-three...and he's only sixty-eight."

"When did he tell you my age?"

Vik smiled down at the girl. Power and sex and danger kept him going. It seemed that more and more of each was necessary as the generations rolled past.

She insisted on another kiss. Her hands caressed his deep, well-muscled chest, his hard belly, his thighs. "Can't you be First Minister only during the day?" Her featherlight touch trailed the length of his organ under his toga. "You're so young below the neck."

Vik controlled the natural surge of blood. He pulled her to her feet. She was small, five feet one, and he was a giant at six feet five. "Dress. I'll see you down the bole."

She slipped on her imported orange silk chemise, and then the furred leafcloth robe. She let the suckers hang free of her nipples; she didn't want to glow as she rode her lion through the forest city to the gargantuan palace trees.

She followed him to the curving wall of striped moss drapery that held the mottled, twenty-foot trunk. "Masil, is it about the weather? And the northern tribes?"

"No." He pulled the drapery aside and pressed a spot in the discolored bark. An oval door appeared and rustled inward.

"Quebo said the ice would drive all the white ones south into our territory in the next few years."

"He's right." Vik led the way down a narrow curved stairway. The rough-walled passageway through the solid, dense pink wood was lit by glowleaves suckered to tiny veins of sap. Vik had to stoop and move slightly sideways.

Punia wanted to probe further. Her pride was hurt by his abrupt change of plans for the night. But she knew enough not to question him too closely; there would emerge a cold ruthlessness of manner, a terrifying remoteness in his dark eyes, that frightened her. She avoided provoking that response

When they reached the bottom of the passage he asked, "Has Ndola changed toward you lately?"

She frowned. "I don't think so." Her face was sickly in the faint green leaflight. "He doesn't command me to his bed as often... but he's really old and he can't

penetrate like a younger man...or like you! But...he told me you're seventy-three...and he's only sixty-eight."

"When did he tell you my age?"

"Two nights ago at dinner." Punia's eyes dilated with anger. "He's bringing that yellow girl to the table now. That mouth specialist. I've heard that she can take a man deep into her throat. They teach them that in the East, from when they're five and six years old."

Vik nodded. "For hundreds of years now." He smiled. "How the Chinese have changed."

"He said...when he mentioned your age---are you actually seventy-three, Masil?---that it isn't natural for a man your age to be so well-preserved...even if you did come from the Nubian Nile where they grow so big."

"He's jealous."

"No, he values you. He said you were the most able of all his ministers because of your knowledge of history. No other man in the Empire knows as much about the world and its peoples as you."

Vik opened the secret door and let her out into the groomed maze of hedges that enclosed most of the base of the massive tree. He led her to his lion pen nearby within the tree grounds. The vast branches swept out and out for hundreds of feet. All land under a tree's branches belonged to the owner of the tree; a large Junto tree was an estate.

Punia joined her waiting lady in the shadows. Vik personally led their saddled lions to them. A moment later the great cats glided away with their riders. The night guards at the gate would let them pass without question. Masil's sexual exploits were known by his servants and a few of his tree force. They did not know the identity of the visitors.

Vik walked quickly back to the secret passageway in his tree. Within, as the outer door rustled shut and seated tightly, he pressed another spot in the curved, axehewn wall.

A rectangular section opened. He entered a second passage that sloped down and to the left. He carefully closed that door behind him. His fingertip continued to pulse every few seconds.

The passageway left the root and became a tunnel. He came to a

wood-panelled, carpeted room twenty feet below ground. Before entering the doorless room he spoke one word: "Olympia." Unseen automatic laser guns switched back to secondary alert.

Vik went to a silvery console and noted the label under the single glowing ruby light among dozens set in the panel. He switched it off.

The periodic, muted sting in his fingertip ended.

Vik sat in the worn, deep-cushioned silvery console chair and thought for a long moment. His finger idly traced a small manufacturer's plate.

KZAR MICROTRONICS
Denver, U.S.A.
2116

His deep, dark eyes focused on the plate. He smiled and shook his head, murmuring, "The good old days..."

He stood and left the panelled room: Sensors in the tunnel "watched" him leave. The lasers warned again to primary alert.

Vik went back up to his bedroom. He took off his toga.

Naked, he pulled a corner of the living rug free of the floor. The hundreds of tiny suckers made minute popping sounds, leaving dot-like green marks on the raw boards that had fused together and grown solidly to the joists, which had in turn cemented themselves to the broad limb upon which the bedroom rested...or from which it grew.

The tree supported thirty-two parasitical rooms with attendant plant furnishings, glowleaves of various colors, and hollow water and sewage vines.

Vik lifted a small trapdoor in the floor and lifted out an unlocked killed-wood chest from the two-foot deep cavity. He opened the chest and reached in for a soft, lion hide holster. He strapped it to the side of his massive left thigh.

He took a chamois-wrapped revolver from the chest. The gun was very old but well oiled and cared for. It had been made by hand and ancient machine over two hundred and fifty years before, by the steel guildmen in F'Derick in the north-west Sahara where the last deposits of iron had been jealously guarded and gradually used over a millenium.

Vik armed the gun with hand-loaded ammunition. Guns were rare and expensive. Most were rusted

new museum pieces---in the few museums remaining. Ammunition was the problem. Shell casings were priceless.

He rarely used this pistol anymore, but tonight it would be good to have in reserve. The revolver slid into the plant holster and he tied the flap shut with a quick release knot. He returned the chest to its hiding place in the floor and took a jeweled, razor-sharp knife with matching sheath from a decorative wooden hook on the wall over the bed, strapping it to his left leg below the knee.

Then he stepped into a loin protector of leather and rubber, adjusting his large genitals in the cup. He slipped a dark red silk tunic over his head and finally cinched a wide, heavy-buckled belt tight around his waist.

Vik left his tree by way of the secret passageway in the trunk. He exited the grounds by way of a tunnel under the high, poisonous thorn hedge that bordered his treeland and began to run, effortlessly, north, weaving between the huge tree homes in the darkness. His bare feet slapped quietly on the smooth, leaf-cushioned ground.

Pale glowleaf path signs dotted the park-like between-trees areas, patches of colorless moonlight penetrated the acres of overhead foliage.

Only a few people were out in the wide, intertwining paths that snaked between the trees, for he lived in the exclusive, upper-class residential area of Kinshasa, the imperial city.

Vik avoided the lion-riders, who were easy to see, as were the white skins of lower caste slaves sent out on unknown midnight errands. He was hard to spot, impossible to follow; a black ghost who loped tirelessly north toward the city's slightly less exclusive Stalee Pool suburb.

Vik ran two miles. He slowed to a walk as he approached his destination, a squat tree home of modest two-hundred foot spread and ten-foot bole.

The glowleaf sign at the gate of the surrounding living thorn fence read: DOCTOR KIAMBI, 742011. All residence and government and business trees in the city were registered by number and the current owner.

The trees dated from the last surge of highly specialized technology five hundred years before, when the Egyptians had flourished yet again. They had concentrated on genetics, had developed the

home trees, the parasitic plant, furnishings...had warped both animal and human genes in a vain attempt to maintain "civilization" on the face of a planet exhausted of mineral wealth...and had broken under the waves of white-skinned barbarians fleeing the long-dying ruins of Europe as the ice, decade by decade, crept inexorably southward. Now the Congo empire of Ndola was the only center of culture and learning and law on the African continent

Vik was not surprised to find the gate locked. He walked slowly along the vicious fence, searching for a break. The sensitized thorn vines stirred at his nearness and lashed at his form. He found a ten-foot wide length of the fence lying limp, paralyzed by a sweet-smelling fluid he knew about. Very few others in Kinshasa had a working knowledge of it.

Vik stepped carefully through the still vines and approached the tree. There was a dayglow of light from the oval, transparent membrane windows of a large room fifty feet up the trunk in a major limb room-cluster.

He ignored the small hydraulic elevator. The cage was up at the cluster, anyway, probably locked. For a moment he paused to study the tree's ramps and stairs, then took the narrow, spiral, servants' staircase that followed upward under the more elaborate, inlaid ramp.

He went slowly, pausing often to listen. He freed his knife of its sheath and carried it lightly in his upturned hand, ready to throw or fight.

Emerging onto the wide, main porch that semi-circled the tree trunk he passed several ramps and doors and approached the doctor's office. The windows continued to glow with light.

The porch ended at the office door. The only way to look into a window was to edge out from the railing by hanging free from a slippery gutter vine at the cornice.

If he slipped it would mean a fall of fifty feet to the decorative marble set in the ground around the base of the tree.

And he would be vulnerable if discovered out there, spying.

Vik pressed his ear to the expensive, inlaid office door. The deep squares and wedges of varicolored woods had grown together; the door lived, fed sap from the five tough but plaint green plant hinges.

He could hear a voice---no distinct words. Another voice, more tenor. And...a groan? Both voices were angry, insistent.

Vik carefully tried the sliding, killed-wood door latch. The door was peg-locked from the inside.

The windows, then. He sheathed his knife.

Standing on the solid, carved railing, he tested the gutter vine with his weight. It bowed slightly but the suckers held. He curled his fingers into the leaf-choked trough and swung out into space. The vine bowed downward even more with his full two hundred and forty pounds. The sucker fibers screamed faintly but held.

Vik hung facing the wall and swiftly slid his gripping hands along the oily rim of the vine. His fingers dug into bird droppings and tiny, rotted corpses as well as the broad, sticky tree leaves.

As he approached the nearest oval window, steadily increasing areas of the office came into view: the desk, a series of bright dayglow leaves slowly burning in a large glass surgery lamp, the killed-wood cabinets of records---one drawer open. The M drawer. Shelves of herbs, jars of medicinal roots and bottles of fluids. A man's shadow cast on the blond wood interior paneling from another bright lamp deeper in the office, to the right.

Vik hung silently beside the window and carefully made sure of his right-hand grip on the gutter. He let look with the left and lowered his arm. This angled his body, allowing him to see almost all the interior of the doctor's office while reducing the risk of being noticed from inside.

Doctor Kiambi was strapped to a treatment table. He lay face down, gagged, naked, his old brown scrawny body writhing in agony. A long, thick eater snake had been inserted into his anus. Two thirds of it was coiled around his jerking, flailing right leg. The other third was deep in the old man's intestines.

Two men watched Kiambi's thrashings. They wore tunics similar in design to Vik's, but of coarse green cotton. They were of the Lualaba tribe---brownish yellow skin and wide fleshy lips and noses.

Ndola was a Lualaba.

One man knelt beside the table, near Kiambi's head. He had a belly on him, and thick legs. He spoke in a low, wheedling voice. The other man stood with hands on hips, grinning. A long knife in a thin green

scabbard swung from his iron-vine belt.

Vik brought his left hand up to grip the gutter again. He swiftly edged further out until he was hanging opposite the oval window. He swung his legs up, planted his bare feet on each side of the window, bent his knees, kicked himself outward closed his feet and ripped through the transparent membrane.

Vik twisted as his big black body cleared the oval frame and he landed on all fours beside the desk. He uncoiled, knife in his left hand, and with terrifying grace and power leaped for the astonished, standing man.

The man was a trained professional; he managed to clear his own long knife in the second it took Vik to reach him. He was too slow. He was only beginning to crouch, to bring his knife into defensive position, when Vik clamped a vise grip on his wrist and slammed the jeweled knife full into his stomach, angling up to spear the keen blade into his thudding heart.

The man grunted with the blow and lurched backward, turning, falling, his wide mouth loose, flared eyes staring with fading amazement. Blood spumed from the wound.

Vik pulled his knife free an instant after the savage thrust, knowing from long experience the man was already dead. The body crumpled heavily to the orange carpet.

The other intruder had almost three seconds. He was older, however, and slower. He was pulling a spring-powered dart gun from a leather bag beside the table when Vik slapped the gun away.

Vik did not waste time. He brough his hand back and across the jawed face. The man's head jerked sharply sideways from the blow. His mouth leaked blood. Vik almost casually pushed him down onto his back and sat crushingly on his chest. His knees pinned the man's flabby arms. "Who sent you?"

Without waiting for an answer, knowing there would be no information, not wanting to play games, Vik seized the man's right hand and calmly, viciously, snapped the little finger.

The man gasped. His eyes dilated with pain. He labored to breathe. His breath wheezed and he swallowed blood. He said nothing.

Beside them, on the table, Doctor Kiambi continued to shudder and moan into his tight gag. The eater snake was following the soft tube

of his intestine deeper and deeper, consuming his body's wastes, ever hungry, seeking more... Soon the snake would eat its way through the wall of the narrowing, twisting flesh tunnel and would gorge on liver, kidney....

"Who?" Vik impatiently twisted the man's broken finger.

The man's plump face rippled with pain. His wide lips drew back in a grimace. He shook his head as he hissed for air. His chest convulsively fought Vik's crushing weight.

Vik undid the man's belt and strapped his feet together. Then he cut the man's tunic free and with it tied his wrists behind his back.

Then Vik stood, grasped the end of the purple, diamond-back eater snake with his powerful right hand and slowly, calmly, pulled the three-foot length from Kiambi's body. The scaly inches emerged sheened with blood.

When the snake's round, wet, suctioning mouth was free, gleaming with half-hidden rows of shark-like teeth, Vik looked to the bound fat man. "It's still hungry. You've got a lot to feed it." He nudged the man's heavy gut.

His prisoner was pale with fear.

"Who sent you here?"

"You'll kill me anyway."

"No, not if you tell me the truth."

The man's eyes seemed riveted to the snake's undulating, red-rimmed mouth. Then his gaze darted to the body of his dead companion. He said, "Quebo."

The Emperor's Defense Minister.

In that instant the tip of Vik's middle finger, left hand, came alive with a throb of pain. Automatically he damped the nerves. He said to the agent, "Why is he investigating me?"

"I wasn't told. He wants your medical records. He wanted me to make the doctor talk about you... about your past."

"And what did Kiambi tell you?"

"Only what the records show."

Vik glanced at the old doctor. Kiambi lay limply, an occasional spasm wracking his body. He continued to moan into his gag. The snake writhed and twisted in Vik's grasp. Vik said, "Where else is Quebo sending agents to investigate my past?"

"North...where you were first seen."

"Interesting phrasing. Did he say it that way?"

"Yes."

Vik stared thoughtfully at the man. "Do you believe I'm seventy-three years old?"

"No! The way you moved! The way you fought!"

"Yes... I've waited too long this time." Vik drove the point of his knife into the snake's spine, just behind the tubular head. The squirming body went limp. He threw it into a corner. "Where are the doctor's servants and slaves? They would have heard all this."

"We locked them in the trunk room."

"Thank you." Vik moved around behind the heavy agent, knelt, hooked a powerful arm under the man's fleshy chin, lifted--

The agent's chest pumped with sudden terror. He wheezed, "You promised..."

Vik squeezed off the voice and drove his jeweled knife cleanly between the man's ribs, into the heart. The body convulsed for an instant, then subsided. Vik said quietly, "I lie often."

He looked over and looked into Kiambi's pain-ridden eyes. "I'm sorry. I warned you fifty years ago this time might come. You've been very well paid. You've had a long, good life. I cannot leave you alive. Quebo would take you... and you'd talk. Kunzar must remain a myth, a dream...a wish."

He picked up the dart gun and sent the bolt thudding into the old man's brain.

Vik took a deep breath. He smiled wryly. "I'm getting too old for this sort of thing."

He picked up the fat agent's leather bag and took out the sheaf of papers he knew would be inside ---his medical history as Masil; a series of medical examinations showing his nearly perfect health through the decades, except for recurring stomach trouble (faked---in the record for credibility).

Vik flipped the pages until he came to one with a tiny brown stain on the lower right corner. He sliced off the corner and slipped the bit of paper into a small plastic envelope he took from a slit in his belt. He returned the envelope to its carrying place.

The "stain" was a micr

mutter, alarm-keyed to light and motion.

Vik continued to feel the timed throbs of diminished pain in his finger which meant another micro alarm had been set off somewhere... probably in Abu Hamid where his birth record was planted along with that of the plague deaths of his fictional parents.

Was this just a security check ---or an investigation into the possibility that he could be the mythical one immortal man on Earth?

Vik put his medical records back into place in the file cabinet and closed the drawer. He went to the torn window and peered cautiously out, listening.

He checked the sections of the tree, porch and stairs he could see. With his knife ready, he unpegged the door and opened it a crack. Satisfied, he slipped out and disappeared into the night.

CHAPTER TWO

The next day Vik sat in an enormous sea-green sofa-lounge in his palace tree's office, and dictated to a series of Messengers.

Messengers were men of great integrity and astonishing, eidetic memory. They were all members of one widespread family whose "memory gene" traced back to the work of the Egyptians. They were a guild and a clan; they never married outside the family for fear of losing the gene. The males worked for governments, the females for private business where they could keep a home and raise their children. They often carried a pouch of documents, but most of the empire's provinces and client chiefdoms depended on their total recall and inviolable honesty.

It meant death to harm or seriously interfere with a Messenger whether he was on duty or not. At attempted bribe was instantly reported. The last instance of a Messenger violating his trust had occurred more than a century before, and he had been publicly beheaded by members of his inner family.

Messengers could not be tortured for information; when their pain level reached a certain point they died. They were very cautious people. Accidents and disease killed them easily due to their low pain tolerance.

Vik wore his purple First Minister's robe of office, as usual, and his gold pendant. A male secretary sat cross-legged on the deep

amber grass carpet, taking down his words on a square paperleaf with an inkstick. Real paper was available but it was too expensive for casual note-taking.

Vik noticed Caiungo, his first assistant, enter the large room. Caiungo knew he had Vik's eye. He pointed toward the ceiling and jabbed once. Emperor Ndola wanted Masil. Nodding, Vik continued giving the Messenger instructions for the east central provinces. In five minutes he was done.

As the Messenger left, with the secretary, Vik asked Caiungo, "What does he want?"

"Quebo's alone with him. I don't know. High Policy, I suppose. No staff allowed."

"No word from the vines?" Vik referred to inter-office rumors, leaks and paid informants. He had people in the staffs of every minister, even that of the Emperor... and they had a few in his entourage. Palace intrigue always existed in power centers. The trick was to accept it and play the game well.

"Maybe that Quebo wants to break your monopoly of glowleafs. Empire defense requires---"

Vik nodded sharply. "He's wanted that for ten years. Tell Diwka to snoop for special agent activity. Quebo is up to something."

Vik left his office by its private exit and emerged on to the ornate, high ramp that curved up to the Emperor's throne room and office cluster. This giant-among giants, center tree of the five sacred palace trees, soared upward into the sky, a living tower that dominated the empire city.

The palace trees had stood for half a millennium. Long ago their major branches had been spliced together to make the grove into a single, joined entity. Ramps and bridges linked the trees at various branch-cluster levels. Slave-powered, counterweighted elevators rose and descended.

Vik looked up at the clear blue sky...at the sun, for an instant. He enjoyed the feel of the afternoon warmth. August, and the temperature was only about 75°. Reports told of the glaciers creeping south of the Alps now, and claiming at least half the Black Sea...now called the Ice Sea.

Vik looked out over the masses of green foliage that hid all but occasional spots of ground. There were broad, crowded lanes and paths down there: markets and shops, lion

pens, pleasure huts, stone banks encircling bank-owned business trees....

The largest bank, The Congo Trading Company, was controlled by Masil Investments.

He turned and walked up the ramp to the next level, slowly, limping, and absentmindedly massaging the fingers of his right hand as if they were arthritic. When he entered the outer offices the clerks and lower officials spread their hands, palms up, and bowed their heads.

The Emperor's Private One, a graying, stolid man in a lone toga with gold threads woven between the pale yellow fibers, smiled and said, "Quebo is with him, eating a little. Would you care for something? Yemena wine? An Indian cake?"

Masil's favorite foods were known and stocked.

"No, nothing now." Vik was mildly surprised when the Private One by-passed the usual private conference rooms and led him through to the Emperor's personal quarters.

The man opened a gold-leafed door for him. Vik limped into a luxurious wedge-shaped study he visited maybe five or six times a year. The multi-windowed outer wall provided a view of a third of the city. The transparent membranes flexed from the breeze outside. At this height the tree swayed very slightly.

Ndola and Quebo sat close together on a curving, purple, living sofa. They were both small men: Ndola wrinkled and skull-like, with sharp dark fox eyes, his thin old body stick-like in the layers of red silk toga; Quebo still strong and firm in a green military tunic with gold piping, a woven gold belt, self-important with diamond and jade rings on every finger.

Ndola turned his lean head and smiled. He said, "Masil." He spoke a fraction off-tone, a fraction too late, and Vik easily caught it.

The "investigation" was known and approved by the Emperor.

Ndola gestured. "Sit on my left. Wine?" A bottle of dark red Yemena sat with other wines, cakes, meats, fruits, sweets, and cheeses on the low, wheeled, killed-mahogany cart before the sofa. A deaf-mute servant stood ready to serve. He knew all the ministers' preferences.

Quebo lifted a palm in greeting and casual respect. "These melon pods are exquisitely ripe, Masil. Try one."

Vik limped to the sofa. "No, my stomach is hurting again. When he sat next to the Emperor he seemed a black giant by comparison. The sofa groaned softly as his weight pressed down on its cushions.

Vik abstractedly flexed his right hand. "Every few years I have to go to the mineral springs of Tukuyu for a few weeks." He closed his eyes and smiled with memory. "Soak in that hot, soothing, bubbling water, and drink it hot, day after day...."

Once away from the empire city, on the way to the Mitumba Mountains, Masil's small entourage and armed escort would be set upon by a ruthless band of cutthroats and Masil, First Minister to Emperor Ndola, would be taken, would disappear... would never be seen nor heard of again.

Vik had staged such exits many times.

Ndola and Quebo exchanged glances. The Emperor nodded. "This body of mine is falling apart, too. Every day I live in pain." He pressed his lower gut. "Pain that only hemp and zizu can tame for a while." He laughed. "But I don't leave my work. The Empire needs me. You, too, Masil."

Vik said, "There is nothing critical. Caiungo and my staff are able to function without me, easily, for two ten-days."

Ndola didn't argue. He slipped off on another subject. "Quebo has just given me reports of white tribes coming down off the Jef-Jef Plateau. They're being forced south by waves of savages from still further north."

Vik nodded. "All of Europe is virtually uninhabitable now, even in summer. We can't blame them."

Quebo said in his rough voice, "We have to stop them. They're tough and hungry and vicious. They're slaughtering our people in the Mourdi."

Vik looked out of the windows and followed the brown curve of a wide tree limb. "Give up the fourth cataract and fall back to the Khartoum line. That can be defended with five thousand less men. Send them home to rest to act as part of our reserve, and send five thousand of our present reserve to defend the Mourdi."

Ndola pursed his thick lips. His keen old eyes shifted to Quebo.

Quebo traced an old scar on his thigh. "That is the obvious military move. The problem is more than military, however. It is also

social and complicated. The whites are fanatics. They are driven by a new religion." His eyes lanced at Vik.

Vik continued flexing his right hand. "The Kum-Zar Quest, I know. I've seen the analysis. It's valid."

Ndola's eyes widened. "You admit Kum-Zar exists?"

Vik smiled. "No. I mean the whites' religion. They believe one of their ancient rulers, Kum-Zar, was an immortal and did not die, but left for the south--Africa--and that they must follow him, seek him, and find him in the promised land. They believe he's here in the warm belt, waiting for them, and when they find him again he'll rule them as before, with infinite wisdom, and peace and plenty will come to their favored race."

Quebo nodded. "Yes, that's what drives them south into our lands. Kum-Zar. Not just the pressure of new migrations from the north, nor the cold. It's not that cold in the Sahara, and there is room in that vastness for all the people in the world. But they know he's not there."

Ndola said, "And, Masil, from all your learning and knowledge of ancient times...is it possible that this god, this Kum-Zar, does exist?"

"No. He's a convenient myth, a creation of the white priests and chiefs, to move their tribes, to justify their migration and their invasions and slaughters. They must think of themselves as a special people, and therefore all other peoples are lesser, and may be killed without remorse. Dehumanizing your enemy is a common technique... and necessity."

Quebo said sharply, "The Egyptians have a belief in an immortal man, a superman who lived, disappeared, and lived again and again. They believe he founded their great civilization and then disappeared about four hundred years ago."

"You've been reading the ancient leaves."

"A myth is often based---"

Ndola shot a warning glance at Quebo. "Enough of this. Let's get some work done. I want to spend some time this afternoon with my sweetmouth girl."

Quebo grinned. Vik smiled.

Ndola smirked. "Ah, Masil, Quebo can tell you how good she is. I sent her to his tree for a night last week." He laughed delightedly.

He fisted his bony, veined hand. "My wilted stem grows to a tree between those cunning lips. That dancing tongue of hers...."

Quebo nodded. "Fantastic skill. I was ten years older by morning."

Ndola laughed. "Yes, yes. She can wither any man--even old Kum-Zar!" He fox-glanced at Vik. "You'll see. I'll send her to you tonight, Masil. She'll swallow your big black pole and you'll live in the valley of the Sun Goddess for a while."

Vik debated for a few seconds and then decided not to attempt a refusal. He smiled widely and inclined his head. "Thank you, Highest One. Tomorrow my servants will find me too weak to be of use to the Empire."

Vik was sure the little Chinese girl would be required to find out certain things about him. It would be a pleasant, challenging evening.

Ndola cackled, but his laugh ended as he pressed his right hand to his abdomen. "She'll be there. Now what about those crystal slabs from the ruins of Nork? They're the key to my tomb."

Vik said, "They're at the temple now. Work will begin tomorrow. Caiungo has arranged a triumphant ceremony for tomorrow. The survivors of the expedition will be honored by your presence and will present you with the twenty slabs they managed to save. Cacola will make a speech recounting his man's adventures crossing the ocean to the Ice Lands of America."

Quebo growled, "Incredible that old map was accurate, and the crystal still there."

Vik replied, "The older the map the more likely its accuracy. Ancient books in my library tell of a huge structure, five times taller than this tree, constructed almost entirely of blocks and slabs of a kind of crystalline plastic. Impervious to wear and temperature. It isn't a long branch to expect some to still be there. The survivors of the Bio-War weren't capable of---"

Ndola suddenly clutched at his belly and bent over. He gestured sharply at the slave. "Pipe!"

The slave began swiftly to prepare a pipe of hemp and chalky zizu powder. He mixed in a heavy portion of the addictive, pain-killing drug.

Ndola bent over further. He keened with intense pain. He whispered, "I don't want to die!"

Vik said deliberately, "Every man must die."

Ndola swivelled narrowed, agony-filled eyes to him, and the wrinkled, bony old face showed naked hate and raw envy for an uncontrolled instant.

Then the slave handed the Emperor the pipe, lit, ready, and the old man sucked in air and smoke greedily. He held the mixture in his lungs and waved away his Private One who had hurriedly entered the room, concerned.

There were eyes and ears in these walls, too.

That did not surprise Vik. The Emperor lived with at least two loyal warriors watching him and whoever he was with, day and night, during sleep, even during his times of passion. Every wall in the palace trees was riddled with peepholes and listening points.

Now, obviously, Quebo and Ndola strongly suspected him of being Kun-Zar. They were not fools. They had a plan, a sequence, which was in operation. They had to be sure before they acted.

Vik relished the contest, the danger.

He shifted to a more comfortable position on the sofa. The cushions wheezed. His movement caused tilts in other cushions. Ndola swayed and sucked loudly on his pipe, and said, "Leave me. Tomorrow...." His eyes closed. The Emperor's face was relaxing.

Vik rose and limped to the door. Quebo showed a palm and let him leave first.

Later that afternoon Vik left his offices and took the long elevator to the ground. He was accompanied by his own Private One, a personal secretary, and the president of his shipping company.

Vik had never liked the swaying, creaking, killed-wood cage, the dead rope vines, the pulleys or the six-man gang of white slaves who manned the clacking, ratcheted windlass. It was too easy to have an "accident".

But his rank and his limp made a long walk down the ramps and stairs out of the question for a man of his proclaimed age.

Vik watched the basketed counterweights rise toward their descending cage. He said, "Schedule the extension of our docks in Zuccra and here, out to the six-fathom depth at low tide. The ice will claim enough water in the next hundred years to make our present docks unusable." He automatically scanned the palace grounds as the cage sank below the giant lower branches.

The president asked, "Why are you concerned about the future of the Congo Shipping Company that far ahead?"

"You know I have an heir in India. It's for him and his son and his son... And I'm doing my little bit to ensure trade and civilization will continue. It's a hobby."

The pattern of people below, most of them going home, seemed normal. His prize lion, Copper Tom, waited with a groom and two of Vik's personal guards.

Vik added, "Set up an automatic company policy directive: buy all tidal lands as they become available. But the continental shelf if you can, now. Put in a formal buy application and I'll see if Ndola will trade worthless sea-covered land for pure gold. One hundred milled emperors per mile."

The secretary made notes on his pad of white leaves.

Vik's Private One was servant, tree-keeper and friend. He said, "Borus told me you'll have a lovely one for company tonight. Nimbus soup, water buffalo steak and Iona seeds for dinner?"

Vik nodded. "Private. You serve."

The cage bumped down on its marble platform. A slave opened the door for them.

Three minutes later Vik was astride his huge cat. The golden-maned beast ambled through the crowded lanes and streets of the haphazard ring of shops, huts, buildings of all kinds, tents and cart merchants that encircled the walled grounds of the palace trees.

Vik was in the center of his small party. He was Masil, First Minister, a magnificent black giant in these times of smaller and smaller men as each generation passed. He enjoyed the awe and respect in most of the faces of the people. He enjoyed the rumors that he was the secret emperor, that Ndola was only a front.

Suddenly the attack began---a sudden clot of men, a braying, mad-dened donkey, goaded by thorn whips, sent plunging with his loaded fruit cart into the diamond formation of Vik's company.

Vik was the center. The target.

The lead guard's lion whirled, nearly throwing its rider. The secretary's small female mount hissed and slashed reflexively at the terrified animal. A donkey will never willingly get within ten feet of a lion.

The ass screamed and stumbled, his shaggy brown coat suddenly ripped, running blood. The cart's left wheel came off its axle and the fragrant load of violet werzi grapes was spilled. Someone threw Mongo powder into the muzzle of the rear lion. The cat recoiled and plunged away.

A quick, muscular young man in a tattered jungle tunic raised a dart gun and aimed at Vik from ten feet. He was surrounded by a wedge of other young men dressed as beggars and lower-class laborers.

Vik had only a few seconds in which to try to escape the attack. The wedge of men was surging closer. He shifted to throw himself off to his lion's left side and use Copper Tom as a shield, when his Private One's mount, a dun-colored female reacting to the stink of fear and excitement and the screaming press of people, closed the space and bumped hard against Vik's left leg. The Private One was as wild-eyed as his cat.

For a precious instant Vik lost his balance and his coordination. The knot of attackers was within five feet of him. The secretary had fallen from his saddle; the small mount crouched and coiled. The men leaped over it, pushing closer.

Vik wore a ceremonial dagger. But he knew his best course was to get clear.

He bellowed, "TOM! LEAP!"

But the great cat had no space, took too long to crouch for the spring that would take it over the braying, kicking donkey and the lead guard's lion.

The guard was off his mount and lunging with his precious antique sword to defend Vik---but it would be too late. At the last split second Vik lashed out with his own razor-sharp dagger and laid open the face of an attacker. A grotesque slab of raw cheek flapped away from the jaw bone, but simultaneously the man with the dart gun fired at point-blank range.

Pain exploded in Vik's right thigh. The dart buried itself a hands-width below his hip joint, the green and red feathered shaft protruding from his toga, pinning the heavy purple brocade to his thigh. The material soaked up the rapidly welling blood.

Then Copper Tom's great bunched muscles released and Vik was carried upward by that tremendous surge of animal power...soaring for an incredible second...barely able to shift his weight to stay in the sad-

die. During that bound, Vik automatically "disconnected" in input from the nerves of his damaged thigh.

And he realized the trigger man hadn't intended to kill. There had been time and freedom for a shot to the stomach or heart, even for a less sure head shot. But the gun had been fired directly at his thigh. There had been no hesitation, no shifting of aim. The dart had travelled less than a foot.

Copper Tom landed, snarling, in the midst of scrambling, howling, terrified people. Vik bent low into the clean, abundant yellow name. "Home!"

The mighty lion uncoiled again and bounded through a narrow gap in the dense, hysterical crowd.

Vik felt the grating of the dart's saw-tooth ironwood point against his thigh bone during the ride. Blood flowed down his leg in spite of his constriction of the main vessels.

Copper Tom loped toward the home tree by the direct route, the one usually travelled to and from the palace compound. Vik steered him off into side paths, to avoid possible secondary ambushes. The giant trees loomed in sunset splendor. He avoided any approach to the date of his tree ground. He neared the tree from the opposite side and urged Copper Tom to a full-speed run at the fifteen-foot high poisonous thorn hedge that surrounded his land.

"Up, Tom!"

The great cat soared in a fantastic leap. No other lion of those bred and gene-altered for size and strength and obedience could have done it with Vik's weight on his back.

The green-tipped rows of thorn spikes stirred as Copper Tom cleared their highest tips by a foot. The landing was silken as the cat's muscles and bones absorbed the shock and transferred speed and mass into continuing forward motion of the deep, tightly woven grass.

Three gardeners working in a new, oval bed of plump Cabon ferns looked around in astonishment. Vik motioned them back to work. He rode to the gloom of the pens and dismounted carefully.

Dambo, the over-eager assistant to his Private One, came running down a ramp, his light blue servant tunic flapping, his gold authority bracelet gleaming as he passed through a thin shaft of orange sunlight.

Vik impatiently cut off the

youth's shocked words. "Send a messenger for Doctor Choma. Get the elevator down."

Taleg, a big, muscular black man in rich dark blue leathers and gold command necklace, sprinted around the corner of the pens. He was followed by a ten-man troop of estate guards---five swords, five bowmen. His steady eyes flicked at the pinned, blood-stained toga, the dart still solidly embedded in Vik's leg, the small trickle of red that was dampening the hard-packed earth next to Vik's wet, goldcloth sandal.

Taleg snapped, "The big yellow cushioned chair!" He pointed to three of the guards and waved them toward the master gardener's hut.

Vik said, "Draw forty men from the Kwa orchards. I want them here by midnight. He didn't have to tell Taleg to double the hedge security and send out undercover scouts. But if the Emperor was ready to move against his First Minister a company of crack private guards couldn't hold against Quebo's massed regu-lars.

Vik explained to Taleg: "We were ambushed in the market ring. Send some men to see about Uvira, Mwanza and Isiro and the two guards. I want Caiundo here. I want Luishia and Gombe here at morning sun."

Dambo had run off. Vik saw a lean, tan messenger on a fast Walla lion riding toward the arched, kill-eld-wood gate. A guard opened a smaller door within the gate and the rider and his mount squeezed out. Other guards stood ready at the gate's arrow and spear posts.

The large elevator creaked down from Vik's private cluster. From the hut the guards brought the master gardener's pride and only real luxury---his massive, deeply cushioned chair.

Vik sank carefully into it. His thigh was aching.

He was carried into the elevator. Sahara slaves loaded more stones into the counterweight basket and pulled him up. As he was carried into his bedroom he caught glimpses of Mwanza, his Private One, and the others straggling in through the gate. They had not been hurt. Ndola and Quebo did not want to have it appear that an organized attack had been mounted against Masil and his band. They did not want the people to suspect the truth, for Masil was very popular. Their attack had only the effect of confining Vik to his tree for a while. An effective, ingenious house arrest.

CHAPTER THREE

Vik was lying naked on his soft, living bed, a thick towel under his leg, the dart still in his thigh, when Mwanza entered the room. "Singida is here."

The Emperor's personal physician!

Vik thought a few seconds, then contained a wry smile. "Naturally. Bring him in and stay to observe. If Doctor Choma arrives while Singida is here, have him sent up."

Vik knew the purpose of Singida's very prompt visit had to be to examine him as closely as possible, to confirm or rule out the possibility that Masil was immortal---was Kun-Zar. The attack in the market ring also served this second purpose. No...more likely this was the primary reason. Vik mentally saluted Ndola. The old man was still as cunning and shrewd as ever. And now, dying, totally desperate.

After a few minutes, Singida entered, followed by a slave who carried his heavy leather medicine bags. Singida was a deceptive, placid, fat man whose breasts jiggled with his belly beneath his gold-fringed orange robe. He wore a diamond ear pendant signifying his royal appointment.

His slave was a middle-aged white man with a neatly trimmed beard. Vik spotted the small endless chain design tattooed on his cheek. It was the symbol of the whites' Kun-Zar Quest religion. The man stared intently at Vik.

Singida stopped and looked down at the deep-fibered living carpet. "Beautiful. A new strain? I've heard about your experimental gardens."

"I'll gift you with one, for your fee."

Singida laughed and approached the big, purple bed. His smiling eyes darted and flicked at Vik's large black body. He wheezed slightly. "Oh, no fee."

The slave opened the bags.

Singida continued, "I was with the Emperor when the news reached him. He sent me to you instantly with an escort of a dozen of his inner palace guards. The lions they have! My poor Zingu could barely keep up."

Singida examined the oozing wound and dart without touching them. "The paths nowadays! Those damned Egyptians!"

Vik said, "Those who attacked were of our race."

"Yes, traitors, hired assassins.

Gold will buy anything." He took Vik's pulse.

Vik had speeded his heartbeats from his normal fifty per minute to eighty-six. He consciously elevated his blood pressure when the physician applied a cuff and poit tube to his upper left arm. The pointer surged up to 190, the dropped and hesitated at 120.

Vik asked, "Still high?"

"It could be because of your excitement and shock."

"It's usually high anyway."

Singida made notes on a pad. "I hope you can stand pain. I'll have to cut to free the dart."

"I want you to use Zizu powder."

"I raises the blood pressure too much. It affects the mind."

"Not that much."

"Very well." Singida personally rummaged in his bags. He took out small bottles and packets. "I'll have to test for skin reaction ...allergies..."

Vik wanted Zizu to dull the pain. He was putting too much concentration and mental energy into manipulating his body processes. If he had to damp nerves and diminish bleeding during the cutting of his thigh he'd be exhausted. An irresistible need for sleep would overwhelm him. He had been through it before.

And Zizu had some interesting side effects.

Finally, Singida produced from inside his robe his priceless, ancient scalpel. He opened its velvet and leather case.

As Vik watched, amused, Singida swabbed the skin around the wound with a series of acid solutions. He rubbed Vik's left forearm with various substances--powders, oils, and pastes. He clucked and hummed as he worked. He said, "You have a magnificent body, Masil, for your age. It's incredible..." His eyes drifted enviously to Vik's heavy male organ, then to the backs of Vik's hands, to the underside of Vik's chin, to Vik's abundant greying hair, to the corners of Vik's eyes. "I'd like to look at your teeth."

"My teeth do not matter now. Tend to the dart."

Singida seemed fascinated, however. "Remarkable muscle tone and especially youthful skin. No loss of elasticity." He pinches and prodded.

Vik said impatiently, "I am of long-lived people. I eat intelli-

gently and I keep my body exercised. But I ache and pain in my joints. That's where my age is."

He knew Singida was testing his skin for dyes and artificial coloring--on Ndola's orders. But his pigmentation was now natural--and had been for over five hundred years. However, Vik would not allow an extremely close examination of his face. There were very tiny signs of plastic surgery required to alter his lips and nose to full negroid legitimacy. It would take a sharp eye spot the almost invisible scars, but if Singida knew what to look for, and if Vik fell asleep as a result of mental exhaustion... It was imperative he remain alert while Singida was present.

The physician finally opened a packet of Zizu and sprinkled the wound liberally. "It will be a moment. You'll feel very little when I cut, but..." He smiled widely. "You know Zizu."

Vik felt the powder dissolving, being absorbed. The deep ache in his leg faded. He began to feel a golden euphoria and a tickling, itching glow in his genitals.

Zizu was an aphrodisiac as well as a disinfectant and pain killer.

He replied, smiling softly, "I know its reputation. But I don't envy Ndola's need for it, even if the erotic aspect brings him some pleasures."

Vik heard the faint creak of the elevator. Choma was arriving.

Singida made a face. "Yes, I have to permit him massive doses. The strains of his sex life and blood pressure may kill him before the cancer."

Vik asked casually, confidentially, "How long does he have?"

"Not much more than two months. He---" Singida realized he had blundered. "The Emperor is a tremendously strong-willed man. He will not permit himself to die. I have seen cases where such powerful minds arrest disease and even conquer it. Ndola may outlive us both. My estimate is highly uncertain. I should not have mentioned it. It is of course highly confidential." He frowned at Mwanza. He did not worry about his white slave, who, after he had been trained, had been deafened.

Vik said happily to Mwanza, "You do not hear our words."

His Private One replied obediently, "I do not hear your words."

Singida did not look much re-

lieved. He unwrapped his scalpel, sprinkled its blade with Zizu and heated it above a candle.

Dambo opened the bedroom door. "Physician Choma is here."

Singida appeared surprised. He began to speak, stopped, and his normally wide eyes narrowed. "Isn't Kiambi your physician?"

Choma is young and quick, skilled and near."

"Of course. He is of Egyptian ancestry, isn't he?"

Vik shrugged. The Zizu in his blood was filling him with euphoria. He wanted a woman. His desire was becoming obvious. He said, "A fine doctor is a fine doctor. I sent for him before you arrived."

Singida shrugged in return. "Of course."

Choma entered. A small, thin, intense man in his early thirties. He was followed by a slave, a blond, blue-eyed youth who carried his bags. The slave was astonished at Vik's size.

Singida greeted Choma warmly. For a moment, the two physicians conferred in a far corner of the bedroom about the cutting that had to be done. Then they returned. They worked together well. Choma deferred to Singida, who did the delicate flesh cutting. Vik watched alertly. His right thigh from his hip to near his knee was nearly dead to sensation.

Singida used his scalpel with skill--slicing deep into muscle to free the dart's head. His hand was steady and knowing.

Choma swabbed and used small springwood clamps on tiny arteries.

Singida said, "Remarkable lack of bleeding."

Choma joked, "That's the Zizu--all his blood is in his pole."

Within five minutes the dart was removed. Singida dropped the short, bloody shaft into a drawstring cotton bag.

Vik said, "I want that."

"I was asked to retain it for study. It might lead to those who attacked you."

"I'll return it to Quebo soon."

Singida blinked and hesitated. He handed the bag to Mwanza. He looked sharply at Vik but said nothing more.

Choma had stitched the wound. His full lips quirked as he sprinkled on more Zizu. He applied a dressing or clean, white cotton and covered everything with a rubbery,

porous, adhesive membrane peeled from Jop tree scabs.

One tree, skilfully slashed, would produce enough membrane to cover ten large wounds per day. Vik owned most of the Jop tree orchards in the empire.

"How long will I be on my back?"

Singda rubbed his wide nose. "You can take a few steps a day. Nothing violent or you'll rip it open. No riding, no travel for at least a ten-day."

Choma nodded in agreement.

Vik set special autonomic fast-healing processes in action. He thanked Singda. "If you will, please express my appreciation to Ndola. I'll be back in the palace trees as soon as possible. Until then I will be in constant contact with my able assistants."

He said to Choma, "Will you return frequently to check the healing and renew the bandage?"

Choma nodded. His was a large, secret retainer fee. This was the first time he had been called upon in eight years.

"One last thing---provided I stay on my back and stay quiet, is it medically advisable to indulge the Zizu?" It was a mock question, and Vik's lips quirked.

Both doctors laughed. Singda said, "Yes, enjoy the Emperor's favor tonight!"

The doctors left, followed by their slaves, and Mwanza entered with two girl servants who sponge-bathed Vik. They giggled at his arousal. They patted him dry with thick, soft towels and helped him ease into a pale green silk robe.

Vik enjoyed himself by caressing their sleek brown bodies. Warm, smooth female flesh always pleased him. One of the two, Feshi, a new girl, all golden-brown and velvet-skinned, rounded and buoyant with the juices of puberty, flushed and licked her lips constantly. Her nipples were spectacular little purple fingers. She squirmed when he suckled one for a few seconds. He whispered, "When I'm well, Feshi..."

She flushed even more and giggled uncontrollably with the excitement and importance of being desired by the great Masil.

Twilight was deepening. Glow-leaves were uncovered.

Mwanza left with the girls.

Vik lay relaxed. He tuned out the insistent Zizu lust and considered his situation.

Vik had been careless and he had seriously underestimated Ndola and Quebo. It had been decades since he had been in any serious personal danger. He'd settled into a rut of power and sex. He'd played the eternally fascinating high finance game again and neglected the little signs of Ndola's illness and personality change. He had ignored Quebo's steady accretion of influence and power.

The human element---greed, the fear of death, and the urge to greater power in rulers and would-be rulers---it never changed and it was always deadly.

Vik knew he had to tighten up his economic empire. It was important that the central bank survive and the plan go forward after his disappearance and presumed death. For the ten millionth time, he wished he were not so damned tall! Why had they chosen a six foot five basketball player to become the one immortal man on Earth? Had the alien experimenters expected the average man's size to increase over the generations? Instead, after the horror of the Bio-War had wiped out the world's cows and so many other animals, mankind began to shrink as basic nutrition suffered.

Now he was a giant. His size made hiding after "dying" and then reappearing with another identity nearly impossible. No wonder there was a Kun-Zar myth. No wonder he was always fighting the suspicions and wishes of mortal men and women.

He estimated Singda would report Masil probably truly black, and an exceptional old man. But the doctor knew what Ndola wanted to hear...so there would be ambiguity. There wasn't opportunity for enough tests....

And Quebo... That man was young enough not to care much about death. He wanted to be Emperor and he wanted to bring down Masil and confiscate the Masil fortune and economic leverage. Quebo was undoubtedly using Ndola's pain and dread of death to maneuver the Emperor into constructing a case against Masil---if not as Kun-Zar, then as a traitor, a conspirator with the Indians...the northern tribes...even the Allied Amazon States.

Vik knew all about the process of public and private manipulation aimed at destroying a man. So Quebo and Ndola had him vined down while they investigated him, while they made certain arrangements....

No doubt Ndola's favorite love-slave would try to pry in certain

areas, and maybe even carry on Singda's experiments in her own way.

Vik chuckled. It would be an interesting game. He could use her in more ways than one.

And tomorrow the counter-attack. Stories would spread of Quebo's stealing vast sums of Army gold, cheating the soldiers of their pay as they fought the white barbarians. The bank would delay certain loans and payments. There would be leaf-work problems, hints of corruption in high trees, and the word would go out again, more insistently, that Ndola was dying, incapable of rule. Shipments of vital war materials would be delayed. Ships would miss tides, would not arrive on schedule, certain key guilds would walk off government projects.

More important, the east coast tribes would begin to talk again of secession and independence. And there would be plenty of money behind them, many skilled agents, and many army and navy units would declare their sympathy with the movement.

That would show Ndola and Quebo how dangerous it was to strike against Masil. The Emperor had to be reminded of the fragility of his rule and the thinness of his power. He was essentially a figurehead. He held the palace trees because Masil and his banks permitted it. In fact, Vik had had Emperor Pamba assassinated in order to put Ndola in the palace trees. But agony and rapidly approaching extinction had made the man desperate; what had Ndola to lose?

Vik realized Ndola should have been retired years ago. He smiled disgustingly to himself. Sloppy. Stupid. He decided to sleep for an hour, or until Mwanza announced the arrival of Chen Li.

It was full dark when his Private One awakened Vik and announced her presence. A few minutes later Vik received her.

Chen Li glided regally into the room. Tiny ring-bells decorated her bare toes and tinkled with each step on the golden, living carpet. She wore a violet spidervine gown that clung to her slender, graceful body, rippled free as she moved, then clung briefly again. The gown glowed softly with life. The purple suckers on her nipples were almost as large as her diminutive breasts themselves. Her straight black hair flowed and twisted luxuriously into a smooth knot at the back of her finely modelled head. Jewelled pins sparkled in her hair. Her features were strongly Asian. Her mouth was a delicate rosebud.

She bowed. "I am proud to be in the presence of the great Masil."

"I'm happy the news of my injury did not keep you away."

"The Emperor instructed me to give you pleasure if you wish, or to converse, or to leave...as you wish."

Vik gestured her to his bed. "I'm zized to my eyeballs, Li. But we'll eat and talk a bit before we pit you against the drug."

Chen Li's dark, slanted eyes twinkled. She climbed, childlike, unceremoniously, on to the big purple bed. She was very small beside him.

Mwanza arranged large fluffy pillows behind her and served tall, thin, blue glass drinks of an amber liquor. He served cheese and carved fruit, bread arrows and cinnamon fingers.

Vik joked with her. He noticed she ate carefully and favored the left side of her jaw. "Bad tooth?"

Her eyes flickered. "Yes, but it will not interfere..."

"I'm sure it won't."

After a few minutes, Mwanza entered with a serving cart and two bed trays.

As they ate, Vik asked, "Are you very recently from the Yaan Temple of Glorious Sun?"

Her eyes widened. "Yes, only a year. It is not often that anyone this far from my homeland knows of the Temple."

"I've known other priestesses of Yaan...in my travels."

Chen Li said proudly, "I am of the First Order." But her eyes brimmed with tears. "I am so far away..."

"I know, homesickness." He knew a special kind of total despair sometimes. Home for him was over a thousand years ago...and no way to return.

Chen Li pressed close to him, to his warmth and strength. "I do not like being a slave. I am not happy. Could the great Masil buy me?...and send me home?"

Vik wished she wouldn't beg. But he was used to it; the weak always used their weakness as a weapon against the strong. The problem was there were so many weak and so few strong.

He said, "Not until the Emperor tires of you. But you know he might die soon."

"He has given me to Quebo upon his death! That man is crude and

foul. He tried to enter me! He is not interested in my ways."

"Quebo would never sell you to me. He hates me."

Li was desperate. "You are powerful. I have heard that you are more powerful than anyone, even the Emperor. You could acquire me if you wished. I can give you the purest ecstasy. I can..."

She slipped her hand gently, simultaneously, into his robe. Her touch was exquisitely light and knowing. She whispered, "The Zizu will be my ally, not my foe. The great Masil will want me with him forever."

Vik signalled Mwanza. "Take these trays away and you can go to your apartment. Come at dawn."

Vik was sure Chen Li had no weapon on her body; the loosely woven spidervine material allowed no hiding place. There might be a long, deadly pin in her knotted mass of hair, but Vik intended to check that out very soon. However, he didn't believe she had been sent to kill him or further disable him. She was another test, another investigator.

Mwanza retired.

Chen Li left the bed and, facing him, proudly removed her gown. When she eased off the vine's nipple-suckers the gown faded to a dull lilac. Her body hair had been plucked.

She returned to the bed and curiously, artfully, opened his robe. "Ahhh..."

Vik caressed her hair, her small delicate body, then allowed his sexual appetite full satisfaction. He enjoyed her varied techniques, her elaborate sensual preliminaries.

In time he was trembling. Chen Li lay upon him, her slender ivory thighs spread wide on his massive black chest, her warm little hands cupped his sack, her rosebud mouth engulfed him as her head and shoulders rocked to and fro, taking and taking and taking...

The hours passed. Chen Li practiced her fantastic skills. She brought him to mind-bending rapture time after time.

It was early morning, before dawn. He was nearly exhausted. Yet the Zizu kept his organ in high erection. He had given her the pleasure of his tongue, delighted her, and had brought her to wracking climaxes. Now she again wept and begged him to save her, to buy her, to save her somehow.

Vik wished he could. He was

sleepy, sated, feeling fond of her and sympathetic. But he had to disappear soon. Alone. He couldn't take along a pleasure girl, even one as incredibly skilled as Chen Li. Masil had to die, and he had to surface, changed, in India. This current period of his immortal life was finished.

He thought of promising her freedom at the first opportunity, if she would be his informant in Ndola's private times. She could learn things... But his fast-healing process would allow him to move quickly, normally, in a few days.

And her begging angered him. Her self-pity quickly created contempt for her. He mistakenly withdrew his empathy...distanced...and looked at her as a mere mortal.

Vik said, "I'm sorry. I can't help you." He yawned.

She slumped. Her head fell to his loins. "Then I am sorry, too. I must buy my freedom in the worst way. I would have lied for you."

She quickly filled her sweet mouth with his manhood. Her tongue slithered...and she suddenly bit down hard, using her left molars.

The pain brought him to instant alertness. His big hand crashed against the side of her head. She was knocked aside, senseless.

He was bleeding. He had felt a soft "give" of one of her teeth, and the stab of a hidden sliver of bone. Vik saw bits of hard wax on his flesh. She had injected him with a cunningly contrived device. Something was in his bloodstream now. A strange paralysis was spreading in his body. Vik slowed his heartbeat, but it was too late. He cursed and called, "MWANZA!"

But his Private One was probably still asleep. No one heard.

Vik couldn't move. In a moment he was barely able to breathe. He knew the drug now: a secretion from a rare vine beetle.

Chen Li stirred, whimpered, and slowly crawled off the bed. She spat several times. She uncovered a bright, white radiance glowleaf lamp, pulled aside the red drapes that covered an oval window, and waved the light before the transparent membrane. Then she sat cross-legged on the carpet and did not look at Vik.

He heard the beginning cries of an all-out assault.

A moment later he heard Mwanza rush in and saw his servant's face appear in his field of vision. He heard Mwanza's questions but could not answer.

The battle outside at the tree's borders and on the grounds was a staccato series of shouts, cries of agony and rage, the throaty roar of disturbed lions

Mwanza understood after a moment, what Chen Li had done, and the significance of the attack. This was the end. He turned on Chen Li and savagely deflowered her with a long, curved knife. Her shriek seemed to tear out her throat. Then he disemboweled her.

Sobbing, grunting, Mwanza turned Vik on his side so his master could see he had been revenged.

The defenders were quickly overwhelmed. Mwanza and a few servants and tree guards staged a despairing, last-ditch fight outside the high cluster, while Vik lay paralyzed, his mind a grim pool of self-recrimination, unable to tell them of the secret passage. He closed his eyes but heard Mwanza's choking, frothy cry as an army spear ripped up through the Private One's lungs.

He kept his eyes closed and barely breathed as triumphant soldiers poured into his bedroom and joked and bragged and pricked his naked body with their spears and swords and bone knives.

He began the process of Slowing. He shut down his body even further, retreating into a kind of half sleep. He was vaguely aware of being moved. Her permitted himself marginal hearing and awareness of body position.

He was taken from his tree. A covered cart. Another room. Lying on his back. A long silence.

CHAPTER FOUR

He surfaced his awareness: acute hearing first. Footsteps on stone, soldier voices. Grumbling lions. A rat scuttling close by.

Then smell: mustiness...straw? Urine-shit smell. The faint, soured aroma of his own body lotion.

Sight: he opened his eyes a crack. Dim...a stone ceiling. Rough cut stone walls. A small square gap that leaked daylight. He was in a cell in the palace army prison. He wasn't surprised.

Sensation: the Zizu had worn off, the beetle drug paralysis had almost gone. Pain from his thigh wound, from his bitten organ and from the half dozen or so spear and knife pricks. He damped the injured nerves.

He was naked, lying on a too-

short, narrow, vine-latticee wood-frame bed. His bladder was full.

He turned his head slowly to the right and saw the heavy killed-wood counterweighted door. Counterweighted on the outside. The door slid up and down in deep stone grooves. It was locked by wooden pegs that secured the weights and also by bars that sank into slots in the stone.

There was a peephole in the door. He saw a sudden change of light behind the hole as an observer took his face away. Vik knew his own head movement had been noted. The word was on the way to Quebo and Ndola---the prisoner is awake.

The peephole darkened. Another watcher, or the same one returned. Vik lay quiet, thinking. Then he closed his eyes, damped the insistent bladder sensation, and let himself sleep.

He was awakened by voices close to the door to his cell. He recognized Quebo's rough tones. He did not move. Eyes shut.

The pegs and bars were drawn. The door scraped upward. He opened his eyes and watched Quebo enter with three elite army guards, their swords drawn. Singida followed Quebo, and he carried one of his medical bags. No white slaves were permitted in the prison. The door slammed down behind the party.

Quebo met Vik's gaze. He sneered. "The great Masil."

Vik began to damp all the surface- and near-surface nerves below the neck. He said laboriously, "You're clever. But you put too much dung juice into her tooth. I can only move my head. I can't feel a thing."

"So much the better, if true." Quebo ordered Singida, "Make sure."

Singida hesitated a second, then came forward. Sweat sheened his fat, round face. He blinked too often. He said, "There should be sensation..." He took a bone needle from a flat case in his bag and abruptly jabbed Vik's thigh wound through the bandage.

Vik shook his head. His body didn't even quiver. He felt the penetration but no pain. Peripherally, he watched Quebo and studied the tense guards.

Singida jabbed Vik's sack. No response. Suddenly he stabbed the side of Vik's neck. Vik gasped and violently jerked his head. The rest of his body lay as if dead.

The guards relaxed, as did Quebo. Singida said, "Yes, she must have gotten in a good, solid bite." He giggled.

Quebo snapped, "Take your samples."

Singida took out his priceless scalpel and began to cut off a handful of Vik's greyed, kinky hair.

Vik's fingertip, middle finger, left hand, suddenly throbbed twice, without pain.

He closed his eyes in despair. Quebo's agents had discovered the secret passages. The lasers had fired. The double throb was the signal he had programmed be sent. The minipile that ran the computer and other equipment was now plunging into a swift self-destruct countdown program. He hadn't wanted it to fall into primitive hands. It, and the other things in that room, was prime evidence of his link to the ancients and their science. It was enough to prove him Kun-Zar The Immortal.

He had thought it better to have the precious computer and allied equipment and lasers destroyed in a mysterious explosion that would kill all witnesses. Better that Masil be thought a foreign agent or dabbler in the old ways of war.

It was out of his hands now. He had no way to stop the automatic countdown. It didn't matter. But he had never thought events would ever get this far out of control. His mouth was dry.

Singida completed cutting free the handful of Vik's dyed, treated hair. He put it into a leather pouch.

Quebo said, "Ndola is still hoping. He hasn't much time, so he believes in a myth."

"Where is he?"

"At the site of his tomb. Supervising its construction. Dying emperors always think of their glory."

Vik slowly let his bladder go. Urine splashed down between the vine latticework of the crude bed to the straw-littered stone floor.

Singida recoiled. Quebo laughed. The guards relaxed even more. Two of them slid their blades into their scabbards. Vik knew he could kill them all now, in four or five seconds at most. But he wasn't sure it was the best move; there would be other locked doors in the building.

His mouth began to taste brassy. He said, "My associates will take steps to get me out."

Quebo kicked some dirty straw toward the rivulet of urine creeping across the floor. "Caiundo is under arrest, along with your other assistants in the Ministry. My staff has taken over."

Vik asked, "Why did you attack?"

"Doctor Singda found your body amazingly youthful for your age, and so Ndola...."

Singda said quickly, smugly, "Skin...body fat. The fingernails. Upper lip. The body hair pattern--"

Quebo cut him off. "And Chen Li. She knew men, old and young, in special ways. Blindfolded, in a totally dark room, she could tell an old man's stem and sack from a young man's. We tested her. She was to drug you and signal if she was convinced you were not really, an old man."

"The Zizu makes any man young."

"Zizu aside, she wasn't fooled."

"I want to see Ndola!"

"You probably will. I think you're a young man posing as Masil. I think you and your organization killed the real Masil some years ago and... Well, we'll find out from you all we want to know. And if by chance you are Kun-Zar and can live forever...then naturally we'll want that secret---"

"I am not Kun-Zar!"

"---before we kill you."

In the back of his mind Vik had been counting seconds, since the pulsing signal in his finger.

Quebo shrugged. "We'll find out. I have teams searching your tree, inch by inch. And after Singda---"

The stone floor heaved sharply and settled back, groaning. The stone building crackled massively. Chips and dust sifted down from the walls and ceiling.

Everyone cringed and looked up at the slightly buckled beams and surrounding stonework.

There was shouting outside. Lions coughed.

Quebo cursed. "We never have earthquakes!"

A strange, unfamiliar, stomach-rolling terror ruptured Vik's composure for an instant. He really felt vulnerable now. He hadn't been in this bad a situation for six hundred years. And this time it could be the end. He desperately wanted to keep on living!

Then the rumbling thunder of a distant explosion filled the cell. The deep reverberation penetrated

stone, wood, flesh and bone. A fine rain of grit settled from the ceiling. Quebo, Singda, and the guards were disconcerted.

One guard, sword unsheathed, alert, stood close by the head of the bed. A second guard stood uneasily by the closed door. He was lean and nervous. The third guard, sword sheathed, stood alone in the back corner of the cell, near the tiny window. Singda was unarmed. Quebo wore a ceremonial dagger with his robe of office. It was now or never.

Vik exploded into action!

One powerful, vicious kick sent Singda sprawling into the guard in the far corner.

In a split second Vik was up and turning, reaching for the most dangerous guard whose naked sword was coming up. With a stiff, ruthless, two-fingered jab he ruptured the man's eyes.

Vik roared terrifyingly for effect as he seized the sword and simultaneously shoved the man at the door off balance. He whipped the blade around and slashed deep into the side of that guard's neck. The severed artery spurted blood toward the ceiling.

Both guards were screaming. Quebo bellowed and struggled with the golden scabbard fastener that retained his dagger.

Vik went for the third elite guard, who was barely on his feet after Singda had crashed into him. Vik's bloody sword pierced his throat. Vik twisted and pulled it free. The man collapsed, gurgling horribly.

Quebo had freed his dagger. Vik expertly hacked, parting the thumb tendon. The dagger fell to the dirty, bloody straw and Quebo went to his knees, clutching his hand.

Vik stood alert among the bodies and the screams. He waited for the heavy, killed-wood door of the cell to rise and for more guards to enter.

It was what he wanted.

But he heard more pegs and bolts slide into place. An eye appeared at the peephole. Cursing, he lunged and sent the sword point through the hole. It scraped into bone and brought an agonized shriek.

He yanked the sword free and spun around. Quebo was still on his knees. Singda simply cowered and mewed with terror.

Vik quickly and precisely killed the writhing, blinded guard.

The one with the spurring neck artery had slumped to the floor. His hand uselessly covered the flowing, surging wound. He watched, dullest with shock, as Vik took up Quebo's dagger and plunged the curved blade into his chest beneath the sternum---to his heart.

The third guard was strangling on his own blood. The dagger found his heart, too.

Quebo watched with fear and hatred.

Vik stripped the largest dead guard of his tunic and sandals. They were a tight fit.

He checked his thigh wound. The Jop tree adhesive membrane had held. There was no blood. The wound ached through his nerve-deadening mind-set, but he could function.

He pointed at Singda. "Throw me your gold pouch. Put your rings and pendant in the pouch."

The terrified physician complied hurriedly.

Vik looked to Quebo. "You, too!"

Quebo bit back words and contemptuously stripped his fingers of diamond and jade rings. His stuffed these and his heavy gold rank necklace into the ornate chamois pouch he extracted from his clothing. He threw the pouch to the floor at Vik's feet.

Vik smiled at the gesture and easily picked up the bag. He tied the pouches to the pocket sewn into the inside of the tight uniform. The bags bulged his groin even further.

Men carried their wealth against their loins; the constant touch of their money sack against their genitals was reassuring, a symbolic association, and as a practical matter made theft very difficult.

Vik moved to Quebo, towering over him. "Order the door up!"

"No. They have orders. If something like this happened---under no circumstances. Even if I try to countermand those orders from inside. Even if you torture us. The door will never go up."

Vik believed him, but lifted Quebo roughly to his feet and shoved him to the door. "Try, anyway." He held Quebo's slashed hand in a tightening vice grip.

Quebo panted with the excruciating pain. He croaked, "Let us out! I'm wounded. I order the door up!"

An eye came briefly to the peephole. "We cannot, sir."

"I command it!"

There was a hesitation. The outside guard said, "You ordered..."

Vik knew he had a chance. He tightened his grip on Quebo's wounded hand.

"I command it!"

Another, longer pause. The guards had to be oging through an agony of indecision

Vik took a deep, calming breath. "Listen, out there. If this door is not lifted immediately, I will cut off Defense Minister Quebo's sack. And that is all I will do. Your commander of the armies will be a woman. The armies will be a woman. He will be shamed beyond shame. And it will be your fault for not obeying his order now. Consider what he will have done to you--- afterwards."

Again Vik signaled Quebo with a cruel pressure on the deeply cut hand.

Quebo responded, "I command, over all previous commands, that this door be lifted!" His face had paled. Sweat glistened. He spoke through gritted teeth.

There was a scurrying, whispered messages, then a different, deeper-voiced, more confident guard replied, "It will be as you command."

The pegs were withdrawn, the ironwood bars unslotted. The massive, counterweighted door began inching upward.

Vik moved behind Quebo and motioned Singida forward. The physician was quivering.

"When the door is fully lifted, you go out first."

"They'll kill me!"

Vik grinned. "Not likely. But better you than me." He held Quebo's cut hand in a powerful grip and said softly, "We will see what happens to Singida. Then, with me right behind you, holding you like this, with your knife in my hand at your throat, we will move slowly outside. We will see what there is to see, and then you will order all the guards on this level and from the level below up the stairs."

Quebo nodded, still gasping with pain. Flowing blood from his slashed thumb stained the back of his expensive tunic.

The heavy door was up. There was the sound of guards moving away.

Vik motioned the trembling Singida forward.

The fat black man screamed, "I have to come out first! Don't kill me!" He sobbed and plunged through the cell doorway.

Nothing happened.

They heard Singida flee hysterically up the stone steps at the end of the short corridor.

"Now our turn." Vik kept low behind Quebo's short, solid body. He stopped Quebo as they moved through the inset cell doorway. The massive stone frame for the door was very good protection.

Vik angled his head forward for a split-second look up and down the stone corridor.

He spotted a minute movement---a swiftly moved part of a face---in one of the other cell door alcoves. The stairs were to the left. The stairwell continued down, too. There was a terrible, rat-infested set of unlighted dungeons below. They were death cells.

Vik whispered to Quebo, "Now tell them what to do!"

Quebo swallowed past the steady, keen-edged knife at his throat. "Soldiers! Guards! I command you all to go up the stairs! Now! Now!"

A squad leader stepped from a cell alcove to the right of Vik's cell. He was tall and battle scarred. He paced slowly toward Vik and Quebo, his black eyes shrewdly taking in the status of his commander and Vik's position and posture. The rock-steady knife.

The soldier's eyes locked with Vik's for a second. Then he continued on, waving soldiers from the recessed cell doorways. "We go up."

He thought that was the only exit. Would Masil then come up the stairs with Quebo and demand the building empty, and then...

But Vik had helped design the palace system, and had---hundreds of years before---studied the plans for the military jail. He had posed as a skilled-grade construction worker, then. One of thousands of big Nubians who had been recruited for the great effort of skilled building as the incredible, giant trees leaped upward in their programmed initial years of amazing growth.

When all the soldiers had trooped up the stairs, Vik shouted to them, "SHUT THE DOOR UP THERE!"

The door rumbled shut, sending echoes off the stone walls. Silence.

Quebo asked, "Will you kill me?"

"Maybé." He continued to use

Quebo as a shield. He edged out of the alcove and, with his back to the stone corridor wall, moved sideways to the right, to inspect the two cells there. There could be a nasty surprise set up by that tough squad leader. Vik had learned to never underestimate such men.

The right alcoves and cells were empty. Still using Quebo as a shield, Vik inspected the remaining cells to the left of his own. Empty. Apparently all the prisoners had been moved to allow full concentration---on this floor---on the great Masil.

Vik asked, "Any prisoners below?"

"Two. Revolutionaries from Zaka province."

"If there are soldiers down there waiting to rush me, your death will come first."

Quebo said, "Let me live. I'll help you escape."

"Call them up."

Quebo shouted down into the torch-flickering darkness of the stairwell. There was no answer. No sound---except faintly, the shrieking of a man, perhaps now mad.

Vik tied Quebo hand and foot, using strips of Quebo's silk tunic. Then he stuffed a wad of silk into Quebo's mouth and tied a gag strip tight.

Quebo didn't mind. This meant he would live.

Vik squatted beside him. "Try to keep Ndola from ruining this civilization before he dies. I want you to succeed him. Fight the whites hard! Slaughter them! They're nothing but superstitious savages now. Realize that you need the universities. You need the libraries and the museums. Don't be too greedy. Don't be too quick to impose your imperial whims. Try to think beyond your belly, your pole and your gold pouch."

Quebo nodded, eyes smiling.

Vik snorted cynically. He rolled Quebo onto his stomach and expertly brought the edge of his left hand down hard to the top of the man's neck. Quebo slumped into unconsciousness.

Vik stood, and with sword and dagger ready, crept silently down the stairs to the death level.

There were no soldiers. Two glowleafs cast a thin green radiance along the short, bare corridor. There were four cells. Their doors were blocks of stone with a small hole through which scraps of food and rotten fruit were tossed. The prisoner in a death cell ate with

flowers, licked the stone floor near the hole for every last bit of food or moisture, and defecated and urinated into a hole that dropped through gaps in stone blocks to the huge main sewer leading to the Congo.

Rats often scabbled up the awful holes to fight for the food, and often were torn to bits and eaten raw by desperate, insane prisoners.

The creatures in two of the cells heard Vik. They set up a wailing, pleading, desperate cry for water.

Vik ignored them. He had at most another two or three minutes before Quebo regained consciousness and could possibly hear him in the lower level.

Vik wanted Quebo and Ndola to search for an escape passage nearer the surface. He needed that extra time.

He crept behind the stairs and felt in the green-tinged darkness for the grooves of a stone trapdoor. The floor in this corner was covered with decades---perhaps hundreds of years---of grit.

He found the angled finger grip holes, worked his fingers deep through the accumulated dirt, straddled the square of stone, and sucked air for the effort of lifting the six-inch thick section.

Vik grunted---lifted---exerted more power.... The stone refused to move. The dirt and grit had formed a seal---a glue---in the seams.

Vik hunched lower, set himself again, dug in his fingers, and put everything he had into one massive surge of power. Sweat popped on his forehead, on his belly, on his back.

Again!

Again! His thigh ached badly.

The stone moved. It grated as he tilted it on its side.

A terrible stench flowed up from the black hole. There was a faint sound of water.

Vik closed his eyes in concentration for a few seconds and auto-hypnotised himself not to notice the sickening smell.

The interior of the hole was spiderwebbed with filaments of root systems. There were nests. There were small things that moved and scuttled.

Vik lowered himself slowly into the hole, kicking to clear away the clogging network of roots and other things.

His toes found an inset step. Then another. He squatted and tipp-

ed the stone section down. He fitted it into place over his head.

He was hunched in total darkness. Insects crawled on him. He found the next lower foot hole in the vertical stone passage.

He fought his way down to the city's main sewer.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

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LETTER FROM PATRICIA MATHEWS

February, 1978

'Two out of three SFRs have contained a complaint/query about "the earnest young Radcliffe girls" in the publisher's office.

"Look, they are "girls" because for years job counselors have told girls that if they are willing to start as secretaries they could have careers in publishing. They wanted careers. Q.E.D.

'Where are their male counterparts, you mean? In business, calling themselves sales reps, junior executives, management trainees--I've met most of these turkeys. Arrogant ones, in many cases. "Earnest" is a one-down position, which is why the channeled Cliffies exhibit it.

'I'll take your Cliffies if you take my turkeys.'

((Err, thanks, but I decline comradeship, coming or going.))

I HEAR VOICES...

BY THE EDITOR

GWILAN'S HARP and INTRACOM
Read By The Author, Ursula K.
Le Guin
Caedmon TC 1556, \$7.98

I was pleasantly surprised by Ursula K. Le Guin's talents as a dramatic reader. In the liner notes she says she has the voice of an adolescent frog, but I think it is more mature than that... She's very good as a reader of her work, and remarkably versatile. The performance she puts on in rendering "Intracom" using five intonations and three regional accents is fascinating and convincing.

Her rendering of her "Gwilan's Harp" is of professional calibre.

Her liner notes are a delight as she gives an idea of how she reacted to the recording studio.

Recommended.

Ray Bradbury's THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES--THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS/USHER II. Read By Leonard Nimoy.
Caedmon TC 1466, \$7.98

These are two of Ray's early, classic stories, and they will live in our literature for a long, long time. The story of the future automated house still functioning after an atomic attack in which its owners were killed (seared to silhouettes against the outside of the house) is a joy to read for its style and word play, and even more of a joy to hear as Nimoy's marvelous voice--highly trained, skilled--takes you through the day...through the terrible fire.

"Usher II", the story of a wealthy man's revenge---on Mars---against some of a realist society which has outlawed fantasy, is everything you could ask. Nimoy obviously enjoyed himself and relished the stories. Recommended.

DUNE--THE BANQUET SCENE Read By The Author, Frank Herbert.
Caedmon TC 1555, \$7.98

It may be that Frank Herbert's writing style doesn't lend itself to dramatic reading too well. He writes a prose full of asides and density...and this scene is long, somewhat involved and for best understanding requires a reading of the scene--the book!--before hearing.

Too, Frank Herbert is not a professional reader. His voice--too high, and he becomes melodramatic, strains his voice too much. He speaks clearly, but...I constantly wished someone more suitable had done the reading.

THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

Coming in June from the same people that brought you Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine; a new magazine--ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES. The first issue will have a Paul Anderson story with illustrations by Alex Schomburg. The format is 8 1/2 x 11. More info in the Late News Reports.

Penthouse Publications is preparing a new science fiction magazine for December '78 release. Word rates are reportedly double what the current SF magazines offer.

SPECULATIVE POETRY REVIEW #2 will be out soon with poetry by LeQuin, Tiptree, Bishop, Brunner, Wolfe, Lafferty, Benford, Disch among others. This info courtesy of SFR editor, Bob Frazier.

PERSONAL COMPUTING magazine is actively looking for Science Fiction dealing with computers. Manuscripts (up to about 5,000 words) should be sent to Fiction Editor, PERSONAL COMPUTING, 1050 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA, 02215. This news item supplied by Don Wood of the PC Editorial Staff.

DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW by Jack L. Chalker will be out from Del Rey in August. THE IDENTITY MATRIX will be out from Berkley/Putnam in February, '79. Additionally there will be 3 WELL OF SOULS sequels from Del Rey. The second book is so large that Del Rey will publish it in two volumes, November this year (as EXILES OF THE WELL OF SOULS) and Feb/March, '79 for #3 in the series (tentatively titled THE WARS OF THE WELL), which will have maps and appendices and an intro telling how the well was created (on a vacation) in Washington state. Nathan Brazil will not appear in #2&3, but will be back in the finale, where his name will be the title as well. Total wordage 4-500,000.

He's currently writing full time and working on a Sherlock Holmes set in Arizona.

Ace will be reissuing as much of the Flandry series as possible, with some rewriting by Paul Anderson of the earlier stories. However, whether they'll get all of the Flandry stories together is

problematical as some was done by other publishers. Poul Anderson will be doing one more short, possibly full-length, novel in the series. However, the novel won't be done for a while.

Kathleen Sky is working on a STAR TREK novel entitled VULCAN! She is also working on a massive 1200 page tome called SHALOM, which will have 5 major sections and will cover 500 years. The five sections will be called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Kathleen Sky refers to it as "The Jewish Dune".

Gordon Ekland and Gregory Benford will have a novel out in late 1978 entitled THE MAN WITH A MILLION FACES. Gordon Ekland is also working on the LORD TEDRIC series, (E.E. Smith Adaptations).

Randall Garrett is working on more Lord Darcy stories. He also is working on something he calls MY OWN PERSONAL BOOK OF REVELATIONS.

Stephen Goldin will have a novel from Fawcett, MINDLIGHT, out this summer. Also done is a STAR TREK novel from Bantam. TREK TO MAJOWORLD is the tentative title.

Michael Moorcock will have a book coming from Avon titled GLORIANA. He's also working on a 150,000 word-novel entitled MRS. CORNELIUS BETWEEN THE WARS.

Scheduled Daw releases:

JUNE:
STORM QUEEN-Marion Zimmer Bradley
WIZARD OF ZOO-Lin Carter
STAR WINDS-Barrington J. Bayley
TO KEEP THE SHIP-A. Betram Chandler
JULY:
PURSUE THE SCREAMING-Anson Diebell
BEST HORROR STORIES VI-Gerald W. Page
THE ISLAND SNATCHERS-George H. Smith
INCIDENT OF ATH-E.C. Tubb

Alex Schomburg will have 2 F&SF covers in 1978. He also has done a cover for a new series of ANALOG novels, plus several illustrations in ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE and the aforementioned ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURES.

SPOTLIGHT

Featured Author: Jerry Pournelle

LUCIFER'S HAMMER (with Larry Niven) is in its 4th printing. Rights to the paperback have been sold to Fawcett for 1/4 of a million. It'll most likely be marketed as a mainstream novel.

EXILES OF GLORY was one of the books left in limbo when Laser folded. Ace now will publish it.

His two Laser books, BIRTH OF FIRE and WEST OF HONOR, have been purchased by Ace.

OATH OF FEALTY (with Larry Niven) is being completed. It is set in the near future and deals with a new design for a city and that cities' conflict with the surrounding urban areas. It's set in Los Angeles.

He will have an article in the first issue of DESTINIES, the new paperback magazine from Ace, but has no plans to make it a column.

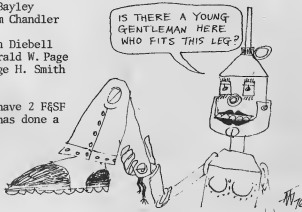
Speaking of columns, the GALAXY column will not change.

MERCENARY from Pocket Books is in its 4th printing. 200,000 copies in print.

The J. Wade Curtis spy adventure novels are being reissued under Jerry Pournelle's name by Berkley. Dr. Pournelle has no plans to use the J. Wade Curtis pseudonym again.

For the first time GALAXY has paid him up. They even paid on acceptance for his serial (Sept-Oct) EXILES OF GLORY.

Kate Wilhelm is working on a new novel.



Damon Knight is currently writing two short stories. Neither of them are SF.

Baronet will publish the first books in the ANALOG Books line in May.

Ben Bova has written a novel entitled COLONY about the first LS colony; it will be released by Pocketbooks in July as their lead book for the month. It is not going to be marketed as SF. He also has a prequel to MILLENIUM entitled KINSMAN, due from Dell.

Jeffrey A. Carver has a novel from Dell, STAR RIGGER'S WAY, due in September. He has also sold Dell another novel, PANGLOSS, and is writing full time now.

INTERVIEW WITH FORREST J. ACKERMAN

SFR: What does Ace have discontinued the Perry Rhodan series, what will happen to it? I've heard that you are considering going to a subscription only plan?

ACKERMAN: Well, it's a very complicated situation. Ace Books has refused to tell the German publisher Arthur Moewig Verlag, that they've decided to quit the series.

SFR: Why?

ACKERMAN: They say they are considering their options, whatever that means. At least that's what they wrote in a letter in response to my query.

SFR: What's going to happen now?

ACKERMAN: Well, the German publishers got hold of the January '78 Rhodan novel and immediately wrote Ace asking what is going on, Ace didn't even send them copies of the last few issues. If this impasse remains and a decision has to be reached by April the first on this, we will probably have to tear up the thousands of subscription checks that people have sent in. A letter is going out to our subscribers on March 16, asking their feelings on the matter.

SFR: What are your feelings concerning the reactions of SF fan-and-prodom to Perry Rhodan?

ACKERMAN: I assumed from the start that they'd sneer. It seemed that

by passing their hand over it, they could tell that it was trash. That seemed to be the level of their criticism.

SFR: What about those authors that announced they were leaving SF because "trash" like Perry Rhodan was outselling everything else (presumably their own material) and would leave no room for "serious writing"?

ACKERMAN: It would appear that they were wrong. Perry Rhodan has attracted an enthusiastic reaction all over the world from Turkey to Japan, from France to the Indian Ocean. It has in some cases taken on the aspects of a cult; I know of one couple that named their baby Perry Rhodan.

(This interview will be concluded in SFR #26, where we also hope to have some word from Jim Baen on the Perry Rhodan situation, and other matters at Ace.)

A FEW CONCLUDING WORDS

I'd like to take this space to say thanks to all the people who have sent cards and letters volunteering information and asking questions. I also would like to thank those who have responded to my inquiries.

On the unpleasant side of life: On February 9, 1978, my best friend, Wally Dale, died at the age of 20 of a heart attack. And the sad thing is that most of the world never knew him. He was the finest, kindest human being I've ever known. He was one of those rare humans who liked and was liked by everybody. And now he's gone and it's not fair. I wish you could've met him. He was my best friend and I loved him.

---Elton Elliott



ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 74

3-28-78 Lousy news from George Warren in a letter that follows. Also some awards news from Jon Harvey, and the Final Ballot listings from Iguanacon. And if possible a couple small letters.

I'm happy, of course, to be on the final ballot again. But the grim reaper is taking the edge off happiness at the moment.

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

March 24, 1978

'Leigh Brackett died the other day of cancer at Lancaster Community Hospital at the age of 60, shortly after finishing the first draft of the STAR WARS sequel script. Burial will be in Kinsman in the family plot. You probably know her list of credits better than I do; but did you know she won the SPUR award from the WWA in '63 for her novel (FOLLOW THE FREE WIND) about the black mountain man Jim Beckwourth?

'When Ed Hamilton died a while back I kicked myself in the ass for never writing to him, ever, to let him know how much he had enriched my own fantasy life (which is the only thing that fiction writing ever has any right to do) through my boyhood. And I wrote to Brackett thanking her for her own contribution to my early life. One of my small treasures is the lady's gracious answer. I think one might have liked her.

'We fuck around and never get around to expressing appreciation to people for the things they have done that pleased us, and the next thing you know they are dead on us and we have missed our chance. I went and let Harry Parth--the finest cranky composer of the century, an absolute dead end in music but the most charming musical cul-de-sac one could possibly hope to explore--die on me about ten miles from where I lived, and I never took up on the chance to meet Anthony Boucher, whom I think I would have loved like a father. I have made up my mind that I am going to let folks know that I like them from now on. I am not getting any goddam younger myself. One of these days I am going to take my battered old copy of KING OF PARIS and see if I can get it autographed by Guy Endore; it is the most charming historical novel (or is it a biography?) of our time, and a literary tour de force of staggering dimensions--a biography of Dumas written in the style of Dumas, and as

exciting as THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO TO in its way.

'Do you remember a Boucher short --published in the very first issue of P&SF--called "The Anomaly of the Empty Man"? I don't have any idea why this was never picked up for the anthologies (the mystery ones, not the sf ones); it is in its own way as arresting as A STUDY IN SCARLET, and the Dr. Vernet character might have made a superb series character --surely he was a lot more interesting than Dr. Fell or Wimsey or Vance and allowed Boucher for once to deploy on a story his truly amazing knowledge of music...'

(Obviously Leigh had the cancer when Ed died. You have to wonder if his death and her subsequent depression didn't hurry events along. I'm glad she could complete the first draft of the STAR WARS sequel script; I hope the final, shooting script retains enough of her vision and form to be a kind of capstone, a tribute, to her life and skills and beliefs.)

JON HARVEY REPORTS: The British Fantasy Awards, 1977

Novels: A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON by Piers Anthony.

2. OUR LADY OF DARKNESS by Fritz Leiber.
3. MY LORD BARBARIAN by Andrew J. Offutt.

Short Stories: "In the Bag" by Ramsey Campbell.

2. "The Flight of the Umbrella" by Marvin Kaye.
3. "The Lady of Fimmigan's Hearth" by Parke Godwin.

Films: CARRIE (Brian de Palma)
DEMON SEED (D. Cammell)
SUSPIRA (Dario Argento)

Small Press: FANTASY TALES #1

- by David Sutton & Stephen Jones.
2. CHACAL #2 by Arnie Fenner.
3. DARK WORDS - GENTLE SOUNDS by Jon Harvey.

Artwork: STEPHEN FABIAN for "The End of Days" in CHACAL #2.
2. FRANK FRAZZETTA for Front Cover of DARK CRUSADE by Karl Edward Wagner.
3. JIM PITTS for Center Spread of WARK #9.

Comics: MOENCH/PLOOG for "Weird-world" in MARVEL PREMIERE 38.
2. GOODWIN/STARLIN for AVENGERS KING-SIZE ANNUAL #7.
3. CLAREMONT/BYRNE for "Starlord" in MARVEL PREVIEW 11.

'A few comments about the above: Would you believe that your story, "One Immortal Man" rated 5th, after

a Harlan Ellison story? I hope you are pleased. #Marvel had a complete sweep of the Comics category.'

((Yes, I am pleased. Also croggled, since I consider "One Immortal Man" science fiction, not fantasy.))

Ron Goulart says, "I agree with you it's about time I did a big important novel. Maybe this year."

FINAL HUGO BALLOT FOR 1977 ACHIEVEMENTS.

Best Novel: THE FORBIDDEN TOWER by Marion Zimmer Bradley.
TIME STORM by Gordon R. Dickson.
DYING OF THE LIGHT by George R. R. Martin.
LUCIFER'S HAMMER by Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle.
GATEWAY by Frederik Pohl.

Best Novella: "A Snark in the Night" by Gregory Benford.
"The Wonderful Secret" by Keith Laumer.
"Aztecs" by Vonda McIntyre.
"Stardance" by Jeanne & Spider Robinson.
"In the Hall of the Martian Kings" by John Varley.

Best Novelette: "Ender's Game" by Orson Scott Card.
"Prismatic" by Samuel Delany.
"The Ninth Symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven and Other Lost Songs" by Carter Scholz.
"The Screwfly Solution" by Racoonna Sheldon.
"Eyes of Amber" by Joan D. Vinge.

Best Short Story: "Jeffery Is Five" by Harlan Ellison.
"Laurelyn" by Randall Garrett.
"Dog Day Evening" by Spider Robinson.
"Time-Sharing Angel" by James Tiptree, Jr.
"Air Raid" by John Varley (as Herb Boehm).

Best Dramatic Presentation: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND.
"Blood! The Life and Future Times of Jack the Ripper" by Robert Bloch and Harlan Ellison.
THE HOBBIT.
STAR WARS.
WIZARDS.

Best Professional Artist: Vincent Di Fate.
Stephen Fabian.
Frank Kelly Freas.
Rick Sternbach.
Michael Whelan.

Best Professional Editor: James Baen.
Ben Bova.
Terry Carr.
Edward L. Ferman.
George Scithers.

Best Amateur Magazine: DIONO-A-SAUR.

JANUS.
LOCUS.
MAYA.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.

Best Fan Writer: Charles Brown.
Don D'Ammassa.
Richard E. Geis.
Don C. Thompson.
Susan Wood.

Best Fan Artist: Grant Canfield.
Phil Foglio.
Alexis Gilliland.
Jeanne Gommel.
James Shull.

John W. Campbell Award: Orson Scott Card.
Jack Chalker.
Stephen R. Donaldson.
Elizabeth A. Lynn.
Bruce Sterling.

The Gandalf Awards:
Grand Master of Fantasy:
Poul Anderson.
Ray Bradbury.
Ursula K. Le Guin.
Michael Moorcock.
Roger Zelazny.

Book-length Fantasy: A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON by Piers Anthony.
LORD FOUL'S BANE by Stephen R. Donaldson.
THE SHINING by Stephen King.
OUR LADY OF DARKNESS by Fritz Leiber.
THE SIRMARILLION by J.R.R. Tolkien.

#540 nominating ballots were received.

'Final Ballots will be sent out in PR #4, which should be in the mails around the first of June. The ballots will have to be received no later than July 31 in order to be counted. Only members of Iguacon will be eligible to vote in the final balloting. Attending memberships are \$20. until July 1, at which time they go up to \$25. (also, at-the-door price); supporting memberships are \$7. at all times. Memberships may be purchased from Iguacon, P.O. Box 1072, Phoenix, AZ 85001.'

Jim Corrick
Gay Miller
HUGO SUB-COMMITTEE

4-4-78 Final entry. I thank all of you who nominated me (and Alter) and SFR for the final Hugo ballot.

We'll be in your hands again in late June or early July, God and the postal service willing.
Take care of yourselves.

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Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvin
Binkin Meets H. P. Lovecraft" by
Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview
with R. A. Lafferty; "The Trenchant
Bludgeon" by Ted White;
"Translations From the Editorial"
Marion Z. Bradley.

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Libido: "Sex and Science Fiction" by
Richard Delap; "The Trenchant Bludgeon"
by Ted White; "Banquet Speech"
by Robert Bloch; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner.

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by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise Level"
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Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's Guest
of Honor Speech; The Heinlein Reaction.

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An Interview With Philip Jose
Farmer; "Dancing On the Titanic"
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on Logan's Run" by William F. Nolan;
"The Gimlet Eye" by Jon
Gustafson.

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"Spec Fic and the Perry Rhodan
Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson; An
Interview With L. Sprague de Camp
by Darrell Schweitzer; "Uffish
Thots" by Ted White; "The Gimlet
Eye" by Jon Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16

An Interview with Jerry Pournelle;
"The Truc and Terrible History of
Science Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
"The Literary Masochist" by Richard
Lupoff; "Whatever Happened to Pay
Wray?" by Michael G. Coney; "The
Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson;
"Plugged In" by George Warren.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17

An Interview with George R. R. Martin;
An Interview with Robert Anton
Wilson; "Philip K. Dick: A
Parallax View" by Terrence M.
Green; "Microcosmos" by R. Faraday
Nelson; "Angel Fear" by Freff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 An Interview
with Lester del Rey; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "A Short
One For the Boys in the Back Room"
by Barry Malzberg; An Interview with
Alan Burt Akers; "The Gimlet Eye" by
Jon Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 An Interview
with Philip K. Dick; "The
Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry
Niven; "The Vivisector" by Darrell
Schweitzer; "Angel Fear" by Freff;
An Interview with Frank Kelly Freas.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 An Interview
with Theodore Sturgeon;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
An Interview With Joe Haldeman;
"The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer;
"The Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson.

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with Leigh Brackett & Edmond
Hamilton; An Interview with
Tim Kirk; "The Dream Quarter" by
Barry Malzberg; "Noise Level" by
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Jack Vance, Ray Bradbury and Piers
Anthony. "The Silverberg That Was"
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